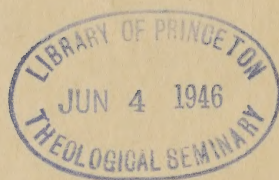


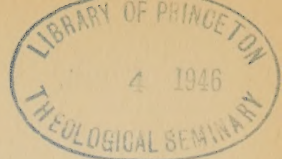
PEOPLE *and* BOOKS

A STUDY OF READING AND
BOOK-BUYING HABITS



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PEOPLE *and* BOOKS



PEOPLE *and* BOOKS

A STUDY OF READING AND
BOOK-BUYING HABITS

By

HENRY C. LINK, PH.D.

The Psychological Corporation

and

HARRY ARTHUR HOPF, D.ENG.

Hopf Institute of Management, Inc.

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PREFACE

IN THE midst of rapid expansion and war-born shortages, people engaged in book production and book publishing began to give serious thought to the changing status and the future of books.

Discussion inevitably revolved about the question, "Is the boom in books here to stay?" Opinion was divided as to causes and to future effects. It was largely a matter of theory, of conjecture and of prophecy, depending to some extent upon the innate optimism or pessimism of the individual prognosticator.

Some believed that the war-stimulated interest in books would decline with the increasing availability of other commodities and diversions. Others believed that the demand for books was directly contingent upon national income. A few bold souls felt that the current wave of popularity was only the beginning of a vastly growing demand for books.

One factor was brought sharply into focus by such discussions and divergent opinions. This was the realization that apparently no one in the book business had any authentic information as to what was actually happening, particularly in relation to "People and Books." Who buys books? what kind of books? and where do they buy them? What do people want in books, both from a standpoint of editorial content and

PREFACE

physical format? What significant trends in human activities, what economic factors, what clues would help to eliminate guesswork and catch-as-catch-can planning?

A committee was appointed by the Book Manufacturers' Institute, charged with investigating what book manufacturers and book publishers could do to establish definite background information upon which they could set their sights for future development.

In the fall of 1944, this committee made its report, and urged that a scientific, comprehensive study be made by competent, disinterested organizations, on "People and Books." The committee was then authorized to arrange for the financing and implementation of such a survey. Several organizations were considered. The committee concluded that the most effective course would be to conduct a study, involving a survey based on modern fact-finding techniques, informed interpretation, and analysis of the facts. This study has been made jointly by The Psychological Corporation, under the auspices of Dr. Henry C. Link, founder of its Marketing and Social Research Division, and by the Hopf Institute of Management, with the active personal supervision of Dr. Harry Arthur Hopf.

When basic research was begun in the spring of 1945, the committee called on all branches of the book industry for financial co-operation. The widespread interest and long-felt need for this project was quickly apparent, as the support was readily forthcoming. Various segments of the industry were organized to help raise funds and to contribute information that might be required of them during the course of the study.

PREFACE

For many favors, and for wise counsel, we express our gratitude to Mr. Elliott Macrae of E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., Mr. Howard Lewis of Dodd, Mead & Co., Inc., Mr. Stanley Rinehart of Rinehart & Co., Inc., Mr. Melville Minton of G. P. Putnam's Sons, representing the publishers' group; to Mr. H. W. Dunbar of the Whitaker Paper Company, representing the paper industry; to Mr. Fred A. Tipson of the T. W. & C. B. Sheridan Company, representing the machine industry; to Mr. Melville Cushman of Holliston Mills, representing the book cloth and supply industries; to Mr. Carl Milan, executive secretary of the American Library Association; and to Judge J. Raymond Tiffany, executive director of the Book Manufacturers' Institute, who was particularly zealous in being helpful and whose usefulness to the committee cannot be overestimated in its work toward preparing for the study of "People and Books."

We hope that this report will be of interest and value in assaying the growing importance of books, and that it will serve as a vital tool with which to realize the fullest scope and sales potential that lie ahead for the book industry.

BOOK INDUSTRY COMMITTEE

SIDNEY SATENSTEIN, *Chairman*

Donald Brock C. H. Wilhelm

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PEOPLE *and* BOOKS

I. GENESIS OF THE STUDY

A. *The Need for Factual Information Regarding Trends in Book Buying*

PUBLISHING A BOOK is a precarious venture. It is anybody's guess whether people will take a book to their hearts and buy it in monumental quantities—as they have done in recent years with such diversified titles as *Forever Amber*, *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, *Gone with the Wind*, and *Under Cover*, and as they have been doing for hundreds of years with that perennial best seller, the Bible—or whether they will ignore it and confound all those who have had a share in producing it. Failure has been the lot of thousands upon thousands of excellent books, written and published in the expectation of success but left to gather dust on the shelves of sellers and manufacturers.

In the unpredictable reaction of the public to books, many factors are involved. A few questions indicative of some of them will serve to sketch the nature and scope of this problem.

If people have ample money to spend, will they spend it for books that they need, or for fiction and adventure, which may be considered a luxury? Do people in higher-income brackets read more or fewer books than those in the lower brackets? Do those who read more necessarily buy more? What prices are they willing to pay? What have educational

levels to do with readership? Living conditions in general? Geographic areas? Age, sex, religious background? What is the relation of book reading to other forms of reading? To other kinds of entertainment? What types of books do people like, as to subject matter, style, authorship, format, size, etc.? To what extent is their choice influenced by book reviews, advertising and other forms of promotion? Why do they read the books they do? Why do nonreaders fail to read books? Do tastes in books change? If so, why and how?

Because the book industry, which for the past few years has been enjoying an unprecedented boom, is now at a critical stage in its history, uncertain whether the trend in book buying will remain at its present high level, will continue to rise or will suffer a sudden or gradual decline, all those connected with the manufacture and publishing of books are seeking data to guide them. They cannot afford to proceed on the basis of hunches or guesswork alone. They have made heavy investments in plants and organization, and those investments must be protected. Firms which have been seriously underequipped and understaffed during the war may now be in danger of becoming overequipped and overstaffed. With all indications pointing to heavily increased costs, profitable future operation becomes increasingly dependent upon the accuracy with which market trends can be gauged.

THE INDUSTRY NEEDS SOMETHING MORE RELIABLE THAN OPINIONS

However shrewd may be opinions and surmises regarding market trends, they are at best based on limited points of

GENESIS OF THE STUDY

view. They vary as much as the experiences and quality of judgment of the individuals who express them. Therefore, they are apt to lead to serious mistakes and costly ventures. It was, therefore, felt by the Book Industry Committee of the Book Manufacturers' Institute that a determined effort should be made to obtain factual information for the guidance of its members and others in the industry.

Other industries, some of them in a sense competitors of the book industry, have been aided greatly by obtaining such information by means of scientific consumer surveys. The radio, magazines and newspapers have done outstanding consumer research. It was decided that the book industry deserved to benefit by the same kind of knowledge, and that the way to obtain it was to go right to the people themselves for enlightenment regarding their habits and tastes in books.

Accordingly, a scientific consumer survey of a selected cross section of the public was undertaken, with the purpose of bringing to light as many facts as possible concerning the influences that bear on both book reading and book buying.

B. What the Book Industry Wants to Know

According to government sources,* since 1939 the total dollar volume of business in book publishing has doubled, reaching about half a billion dollars in 1945. This is an impressive figure, and it is small wonder that the book industry wants to have some idea whether or not these unaccustomed leaps and bounds are going to continue and, if so, at what rate.

* Dorothy V. Knibb, "Reading Trends Stir Book Trade," *Domestic Commerce*, Vol. 33, No. 11, November, 1945.

It has been asserted by some that the boom in books began before the war. Certainly it was accelerated during the war years. Neither shortages of labor and materials, nor distribution difficulties, nor drastic curtailment of advertising allowances seemed to slow down the pace. In some ways these things may even have helped along. This may sound paradoxical; but one of the problems in assessing people's reaction to books is the element of paradox in their motives for buying them. That is one of the reasons why the underlying influences involved may best be ascertained by means of the psychological approach employed in a scientific consumer study.

The ensuing study was undertaken to ascertain the motives and reactions of people who frequently, infrequently, seldom, or never read books; to determine whether they will read more or less in the future, or more of some specific kinds and less of others; to analyze people's *book-reading* versus their *book-buying* habits, and to assess the probable changes in those habits that the future will bring.

C. *Scope of the Study*

The two organizations responsible for this report were commissioned to make their studies of such scope that their findings would cover and their conclusions shed light on the following queries:

1. What are the present reading habits of the consumer? Who reads books: when, where, how many, what type? Where do people get their books? Do they read them after they get them? To what extent do they own books? What is their attitude toward

GENESIS OF THE STUDY

book clubs? Toward sets of books? How and why do they select their books? How do their book-reading habits compare with any other reading they may do? With other competitors for their attention?

2. What changes may there be in reading tastes in the future? What do readers themselves think about chances for change in their future book-reading and book-buying habits? Do they have plans that would include more or less space, time, or inclination for books?
3. What do dealers and distributors think about trends in the book trade? What do educators think, especially in the field of technical and textbooks?
4. Are there any observable trends, changed or changing, from present reading habits? If so, what are they?

II. METHODS USED IN MAKING THE STUDY

A. Determination of Groups to Be Studied and Preparation of Questionnaire

IN SPOTLIGHTING the chief objective for which this study was to be made, i.e., to obtain consumer reactions to books, it was decided that the primary prerequisites would be:

1. Determination of which groups of persons to study;
2. Testing and perfecting a questionnaire devised to elicit the most accurate information possible from those persons;
3. Testing and perfecting a questionnaire for eliciting from dealers and distributors information about the book-buying habits of their customers, and of a separate questionnaire for adducing opinions from educators about trends in college textbook buying.

Because practically everything done by publishers, printers, dealers and distributors is contingent on the behavior of the book-reading and book-buying public, it was decided that the major research would be done among a sample of that public, by means of a consumer survey.

Although research into people's behavior and its causes has made great progress in recent years through the development of depth interviews, polls of opinion, surveys of buying habits, etc., it is still not an exact science. But it is in the field of

consumer surveys that psychologists have made the greatest progress in developing research techniques. These tested techniques have been employed in this study and have been concentrated on those objectives toward whose attainment they would be likely to contribute the most fruitful results.

TESTING AND PERFECTING THE CONSUMER QUESTIONNAIRE

Within the limits of the budget governing the study, it was possible to make either many interviews—as many as 10,000—with a relatively short questionnaire, or a smaller number of interviews with a longer, more detailed questionnaire.

Since the project was an exploratory one, it seemed the wiser course to investigate as many aspects of people's book behavior as possible. It was, therefore, decided to undertake the study on the basis of 4,000 interviews with the longer and more detailed questionnaire. The one finally used contained sixty-three items of data.

Eight different versions of the questionnaire were tested before the final form was decided upon. The first seven versions were evolved after extensive tests made in the field by interviewers specially trained for this purpose. As each successive test was completed and analyzed, the questionnaire was correspondingly revised in a manner calculated to elicit more frank, or more accurate, or more representative information. Each test was made in from one to three separate localities, and comprised from twenty-five to sixty test interviews.

The eighth revision was tested on a larger scale, with 300 personal interviews conducted in six cities and towns widely scattered through the country.

The results of the eighth test were presented to the Com-

METHODS USED IN MAKING THE STUDY

mittee, whose members were thus enabled to see the type of information that might be obtained from such a study if it were made on a sufficiently large scale. With the help of the Committee's suggestions, one more revision of the questionnaire was made and tested. Thus, before the final questionnaire was approved, between December 1, 1944, and May 15, 1945, a total of nine questionnaires was tested, comprising an aggregate of 521 personal interviews conducted by thirty-five test interviewers in twenty-one different localities.

The final questionnaire was then set up in partially pre-coded form so as to facilitate the punching of the answers on tabulating cards.

TESTING AND PERFECTING DEALERS', DISTRIBUTORS' AND EDUCATORS' QUESTIONNAIRES

During the period mentioned, tests were also undertaken in an effort to perfect a questionnaire to be used in connection with dealers and distributors. Three tests of this type, involving fifty-two personal interviews, were conducted before the questionnaire for final use was satisfactorily developed.

It was found possible and convenient within the original budget set for the study to include also a survey of a certain number of educators to ascertain their views in the college textbook field.

It is recognized that a significantly large volume of school textbooks is used in the elementary and high schools. Any analysis of the possible trends in this field, however, would involve an extraordinarily detailed study of population and school attendance trends, as well as of economic factors and

changes in the laws relating to school attendance—all far beyond the possibilities of the budget made available.

In the college field, by contrast, it was comparatively simple to interrogate educators as to their estimates of 1946-47 enrollments and of the available supply of second-hand books, an important factor in book buying for college courses. Accordingly, a brief questionnaire for this purpose was drawn up and, without pretesting, used with 100 college and university administrators.

CONDUCT OF CONSUMER SURVEY OF 4,000

INTERVIEWERS. The consumer survey of 4,000 was made by a total of 235 interviewers, averaging seventeen interviews each. This is in accordance with the policy of The Psychological Corporation to limit the number of interviews per interviewer to a small number so as to facilitate the proper distribution of the sampling and to minimize such risks as those coming from interviewer bias, stereotyped interviewing, and so forth. All interviews were conducted between May 21 and June 8, 1945.

FIELD SUPERVISION. The interviews were made in 106 cities and towns representing a cross section of the urban and rural nonfarm population. The interviewers were selected and trained under the direct supervision of the psychologist in each city who acts as research associate of The Psychological Corporation. In all, sixty-two psychologists were employed as field supervisors of the consumer survey. In the New York Metropolitan area, supervision was provided by the staff of The Psychological Corporation.

METHODS USED IN MAKING THE STUDY

FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEWS. In order to ensure the accuracy of the interviewers in the field, each psychologist supervising work in a city or other area designated one interviewer not employed in the regular study to conduct a personal interview following up one or more of the original interviews reported. This follow-up procedure served to verify the conduct of interviews with the persons designated, and also provided a recheck of the responses to several questions repeated in the follow-up interviews. Any interviews which were not adequately verified by this procedure were not used in this study.

B. Planning the Field Work

HOW THE SAMPLING METHOD WAS DEVELOPED

For the purpose of this study the quota sampling method was employed, but several more specific and more detailed controls were used than are usually characteristic of this method of sampling. A brief description of the quota sampling method may contribute to a better understanding of the conduct of the study.

The method consists of setting up a series of criteria which will define the kinds and types of persons to be used as subjects. These criteria must, of course, be chosen so that they will furnish a cross section of the population with characteristics typical of and proportionate to those of the population as a whole. For example, if people in cities of 500,000 and over represent 22 per cent of the population to be studied, then 22 per cent of the people to be interviewed must be found in cities of that size.

PEOPLE AND BOOKS

The following specific criteria were established as necessary to control adequately the sampling in this study:

1. Area;
2. City-size (including urban vs. rural non-farm population);
3. Age;
4. Sex;
5. Socioeconomic status;
6. Day of week on which interview was conducted;
7. Place where respondents would be located, including interviews in the home and outside of the home.

AREA AND CITY-SIZE QUOTAS. Quotas by areas were set up for the 4,000 sample on the basis of the 1940 census, taking into account such subsequent population estimates as have been provided by the census bureau to show the estimated shifts in population. A comparison of the proportions used in this study with those of the 1940 census is shown in the following table:

AREA QUOTAS			
<i>Sample for This Study</i>		<i>1940 Census</i>	
#	%	#	%
		(000 omitted)	
East	1,335 33	33,691	33
Midwest	1,220 31	30,885	31
South	925 23	25,322	25
Far West	520 13	11,555	11
Total %	100		100
Total	4,000	101,453 *	

* Excluding rural farm population.

METHODS USED IN MAKING THE STUDY

Distribution of the sample by city-size as compared with distribution of the population for this factor according to the 1940 census is shown in the table below:

QUOTAS BY CITY-SIZE

	<i>Sample for This Study</i>		<i>1940 Census</i>	
	#	%	# (000 omitted)	%
500,000 and over . .	891	22	22,368	22
100,000-499,999 . .	613	15	15,620	15
25,000-99,999 . . .	588	15	14,761	15
2,500-24,999 . . .	854	21	21,675	21
Under 2,500 (rural nonfarm) . . .	1,054	27	27,029	27
Total % . . .		100		100
Total	4,000		101,453 *	

* Excluding rural farm population.

In applying city-size quotas to sixty-eight cities of various sizes and to thirty-eight small towns and villages representing the rural nonfarm population, the actual number of interviews assigned is not directly proportionate to the population of each city. The quotas for cities of 25,000 to 100,000 population called for 588 interviews. Since it is impractical to represent all the cities of this size, only sixteen were selected, giving each such city a fairly economical number of interviews to complete. Most of the large cities are represented and the total number of interviews allotted to such cities permitted only slightly larger assignments per city than for smaller cities.

The actual distribution of the interviews within each area

PEOPLE AND BOOKS

and the identities of the cities and towns are shown in the following schedule:

CITIES AND SMALL TOWNS INCLUDED IN THE BOOK STUDY TO REPRESENT THE URBAN AND RURAL NONFARM POPULATION

<i>East</i>	<i>Number of Urban Interviews</i>	<i>Rural Nonfarm Interviews in Towns and Villages Near City Designated</i>
Orono, Me.	40	24
Dover, N.H.	43	
Hanover, N.H.	37	
Boston, Mass.	60	
Worcester, Mass.	40	49
Hartford, Conn.	40	
Buffalo, N.Y.	59	
Albany, N.Y.	52	50
Poughkeepsie, N.Y.	31	
Easton, Pa.	71	
Lancaster, Pa.	75	42
Lewisburg, Pa.	39	
Philadelphia, Pa.	83	54
New Brunswick, N.J.	35	
<i>Metropolitan New York</i>		
Bronx	51	
Brooklyn	91	
Manhattan	60	
Queens	49	
Hempstead	24	
Scarsdale	20	
Teaneck	31	
East Orange	27	
Newark and Elizabeth	38	
Denville		20
Total East	1,096	239

METHODS USED IN MAKING THE STUDY

CITIES AND SMALL TOWNS INCLUDED IN THE BOOK STUDY TO REPRESENT THE URBAN AND RURAL NONFARM POPULATION—(Cont.)

	Number of Urban Interviews	Rural Nonfarm Interviews in Towns and Villages Near City Designated
<i>Midwest</i>		
Detroit, Mich.	74	
Kalamazoo, Mich.	49	41
Athens, Ohio	66	25
Columbus, Ohio	33	26
Dayton, Ohio	38	
Fort Wayne, Ind.	28	30
Lafayette, Ind.	50	
Chicago, Ill.	75	
Evanston, Ill.	53	
Jacksonville, Ill.	76	25
Peoria, Ill.	30	26
Milwaukee, Wis.	68	25
Minneapolis, Minn.	27	20
Des Moines, Iowa	34	29
Columbia, Mo.	39	30
St. Louis, Mo.	70	
Hays, Kan.	40	22
Lincoln, Neb.	35	
Minot, N.D.	36	
Total Midwest	921	299
<i>South</i>		
Baltimore, Md.	56	
Richmond, Va.	39	40
Chapel Hill, N.C.	50	26
Spartanburg, N.C.	24	24
Atlanta, Ga.	34	30
Gainesville, Fla.	40	29
Paducah, Ky.	29	30
Memphis, Tenn.	35	30
Bessemer, Ala.	35	35
Jackson, Miss.	19	29

PEOPLE AND BOOKS

CITIES AND SMALL TOWNS INCLUDED IN THE BOOK STUDY TO REPRESENT THE URBAN AND RURAL NONFARM POPULATION—(Cont.)

	Number of Urban Interviews	Rural Nonfarm Interviews in Towns and Villages Near City Designated
<i>South—(Cont.)</i>		
Fayetteville, Ark.	28	
Jonesboro, Ark.	25	24
Baton Rouge, La.	34	25
Stilwater, Okla.	36	
Amarillo, Tex.	24	19
Dallas, Tex.	30	
Houston, Tex.	26	20
Total South	564	361
<i>Far West</i>		
Missoula, Mont.	6	15
Denver, Colo.	29	19
Salt Lake City, Utah	25	17
Walla Walla, Wash.	38	20
Salem, Ore.	24	24
Portland, Ore.	35	
Bakersfield, Calif.	23	15
Chico, Calif.	26	
Redwood City, Calif.	27	20
San Bernardino, Calif.	20	18
Los Angeles, Calif.	95	
Eugene, Ore.	17	7
Total Far West	365	155

AGE AND SEX. In considering the age range within which interviewing for this study would be feasible, it was decided that only persons fifteen years of age or over would be included, and that the age distribution should be in proper proportion to the civilian population, as closely as that could be estimated in the spring of 1945. Within the limits of the

METHODS USED IN MAKING THE STUDY

sample of 4,000, where the adult population was undoubtedly the most important factor, it would have been impractical to extend the age range below fifteen years and attempt to measure the reading habits of younger children, excluding school textbooks. All interviews with fifteen- to nineteen-year-olds still at school were limited to books other than required school reading.

In the table below, the distribution by sex is shown by age groups and is compared to the distribution according to the 1940 census:

AGE AND SEX DISTRIBUTION OF 4,000 SAMPLES

	<i>Sample Used</i>		<i>1940 Census</i>	
	#	%	#	%
			(000 omitted)	
<i>Women</i>				
15-19 years	267	12	4,376	11
20-29 "	544	24	9,362	24
30-39 "	468	20	8,154	21
40-49 "	400	17	6,725	17
50-59 "	289	13	4,971	13
60 and over	327	14	5,477	14
Total %		100		100
Total	2,295		39,065	
<i>Men</i>				
15-19 years	158	9	4,397	12
20-29 "	202	12	8,573	23
30-39 "	363	21	7,879	21
40-49 "	391	23	6,816	18
50-59 "	297	18	5,118	13
60 and over	294	17	4,955	13
Total %		100		100
Total	1,705		37,738	

It will be seen in this table that the distribution of women by age groups matches the 1940 census. However, more older men than younger men were interviewed in this study as compared to the proportions of the 1940 census. The proportions for the sample take into account the age distribution of men in the armed forces who could not have been interviewed or properly sampled and were, therefore, not included in this study. Accordingly, the sample reflects the civilian population in the spring of 1945.

If the ratio of 2,295 women to 1,705 men were applied to the population as in 1940, it would represent a population of 39,000,000 women to 29,000,000 men. (This calculation excludes the rural farm population, as does the sample.) The figure of 29,000,000 is 8,700,000 less than the male population shown in the 1940 census. This is a fairly accurate adjustment for the number of men in the armed services, because the rural farm population should have furnished approximately 20 per cent of them and the urban or rural nonfarm population approximately 80 per cent, or 8,800,000. Therefore, our adjustments in the age distribution of men may be regarded as a fairly close approximation of the effect of the withdrawal of men into the armed services. The actual age adjustments eliminated 75 per cent of boys eighteen and nineteen years of age, slightly more than one-half of the men in their twenties, and about 20 per cent of the men in their thirties.

SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS. Any study of the behavior of people must take into account the relative differences in income or standard of living, not only throughout the country as a whole

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but within the various sections. The method of accomplishing this in this study follows an established practice of The Psychological Corporation.

In each of the cities entering into the study, the local supervising psychologist has a map defining the areas in which various broad levels of the population reside. Factors considered in this connection are kinds and types of homes in terms of rental value and condition, kinds and types of occupation of people residing in the neighborhood, and other general characteristics which denote standards of living. These maps have been prepared to show decile groups of the population and have been revised and improved over a period of years.

Since this study specified that 30 per cent of the interviews were to be held with the upper 30 per cent of the population on a socioeconomic basis, the local psychologist assigned to his interviewers the streets and blocks in which they should interview people belonging to this upper group. Similarly, the interviews in the middle 40 per cent and lower 30 per cent were assigned by designating the streets and blocks where those groups are known to live. Interviewers were permitted to exercise some judgment in selecting a specific home in which to make an interview, so that exceptional homes—those appreciably above or below the given standard—could be avoided.

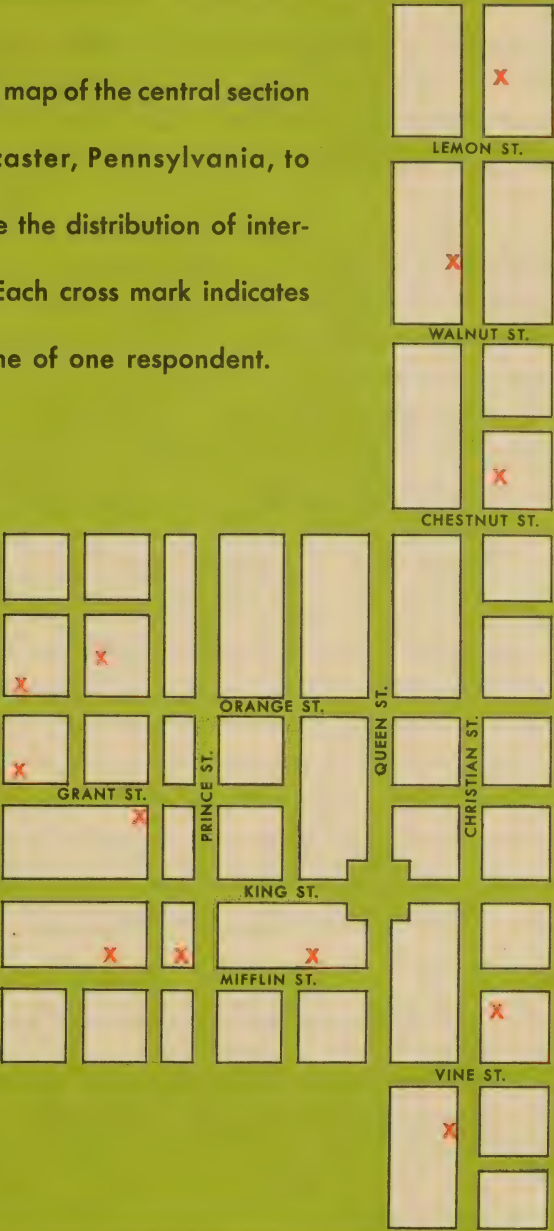
This method of sampling may not appear to have the precision of utilizing dollar incomes, on either an individual or a family basis, but it should be recognized that dollar income is only one factor in determining socioeconomic status, and, indeed, the most rapidly and widely fluctuating one. Housing

conditions, education and cultural factors are far more stable. The people in the lower 30 per cent of the population, as designated on the maps used, had a much higher income in the spring of 1945 than in the spring of 1940. The increased prosperity of the lower 30 per cent of the population may decrease the disparity in income between this group and the middle 40 per cent, but for all practical purposes it remains the lowest 30 per cent of the population on a broad, standard-of-living basis. If it should become desirable to repeat this study in the future, use of the method employed will ensure precisely comparable sampling for the purpose of measuring trends.

In order to illustrate the method of assignment to interviewers as to area of the city and socioeconomic status, a part of a map is shown facing page 40. This shows an assignment of interviews in the lowest 30 per cent of the population, as represented by the central or downtown section of Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Each small cross designates the home location of one of the respondents interviewed in one interviewer's assignment. The homes in this section of Lancaster are of generally low rentals. The map is typical of the method by which the sampling was carried out by the interviewers in the various cities.

INTERVIEWS BY DAY OF THE WEEK. In the questionnaire, respondents were asked about the extent of book reading, newspaper reading, magazine reading, radio listening and movie attendance yesterday, that is, the day preceding the interview. In order to obtain a representative cross section, it

A street map of the central section of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, to illustrate the distribution of interviews. Each cross mark indicates the home of one respondent.



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was necessary to distribute the interviews evenly between weekdays and Saturdays and Sundays. This was done by means of time schedules laid out for the interviewers in each city. Their use produced quite uniform results for the seven days of the week.

INTERVIEWS AWAY FROM HOME. In a study concerning people's use of books, it is an interesting question to determine whether individuals should be interviewed at home or away from home. All the preliminary interviewing indicated that the bulk of book reading takes place in the home. To confine interviewing to persons reached at home might bias the study by the selection of a slightly more sedentary or "stay-at-home" group than if people were approached at places of amusement, while traveling, or while actively engaged in sports, etc. If this should be true, then the people found in their homes might represent a more active group of book readers than would be true of the population generally.

For these reasons, the interviewers were instructed to locate 30 per cent of their respondents in or near places of amusement, downtown and neighborhood shopping areas, various types of retail establishments, and railway and bus terminal points. An analysis of the results indicated that this precaution might have been eliminated without serious bias.

C. General Reliability of the Consumer Study

How, one may ask, can 4,000 personal interviews be sufficient to give a reliable picture of the book-reading and book-

buying habits of the United States public? Obviously, the picture can be only an approximately accurate one, for, as we have explained, polling public opinion is not an exact science in the sense that mathematics and chemistry, for example, are exact sciences. At best, a slightly distorted picture is revealed, because human beings are sometimes unwilling and sometimes unable to co-operate as frankly or as accurately as one might wish.

To offset these human fallibilities, however, the interviewers and psychologists engaged in the study have been specially trained to put questions in such a way as to elicit the most accurate responses possible and to make due allowances for factors which might induce either understatement or overstatement. Furthermore, the techniques developed by The Psychological Corporation are such that if another survey of 4,000 interviews had been made with the same general distribution and the same questionnaire—that is, if another 4,000 people had been interviewed—the results would have been the same, within 2 or 3 per cent, as those obtained from the original 4,000 interviews.

In this sense, 8,000 interviews would have given us approximately the same information as the 4,000. Thus, from our strategic sample of 4,000 persons, we get as accurate a picture of the book-buying, borrowing and reading habits of the urban population as is necessary for our purposes. We specify *urban* population because, as has been pointed out previously, although small towns and villages, as well as cities, were included in the study, the farm group was not covered. This group was omitted not because it is unimportant, but because of the difficulties, during gas rationing, of

METHODS USED IN MAKING THE STUDY

transportation into remote areas and also the disproportionate expense that such travel would have entailed.

Certain other factors must also be taken into consideration in evaluating the results and conclusions of the study. For example, in seeking our information as to where persons obtain their books, only the group classified as active readers, i.e., those who have *recently* read a book, could be interrogated with any expectation of correctness of response. Since only 1,982 of the 4,000 persons interviewed were *active* readers, and since 1,119 of those had *borrowed* the book last read, and 246 had received the book as a gift or didn't know where it came from, that left only 617 who had *purchased* their last book. Thus, we could interrogate only 617 persons on the subject of where they bought their last book, as well as on other characteristics of the book purchased.

TWO BIASES IN THE STUDY

There are two important biases which affect the results of this study. One of these is the bias inherent in the prestige connected with the reading of books. People who read books are proud of the fact and glad to talk about it; people who do not read books are as a rule not proud of it and tend to resist a questionnaire such as ours. For this reason, the interviews tend toward the selection of people interested in books.

For instance, for an interview in a particular home, a certain person is selected. Then, after the first few words, that person may say: "I would rather have you talk with my husband about this," and turn the interviewer over to the husband. Or, before an interview can get well under way,

the respondent may withdraw or terminate the interview.

Naturally, it cannot be determined exactly how many such people are nonreaders or inactive readers, but there is convincing evidence that a large proportion are. Therefore, the study tends to end up with a sample of interviews loaded in favor of the active book readers. Any attempt, therefore, to extend our results to the population as a whole so as to figure the total number of books read, or the total number of book clubs, and so forth, is likely to give results somewhat larger than those warranted by the facts.

The effect of this bias, however, is to give us a richer load of book readers than we might otherwise have obtained. Since the most useful information for our purpose comes from people who are active book readers, a slant in that direction is actually helpful.

The second bias relates to education. In all the preliminary field tests made by our interviewers, it was revealed that the formal education of the respondent was a very important factor in determining his book-reading habits. In one test, made in exceedingly poor neighborhoods representing the lowest 5 to 10 per cent on an income or socioeconomic scale and where a large proportion of the people had only grade-school education or less, interviewers found that more than half the persons approached would not co-operate in any way with a study which had anything to do with reading in any form. Therefore even though interviews were carefully assigned we tended to get completed interviews with the better educated!

An objective measure of the effects of this bias on our sample may be had by comparing the education of our 4,000

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people with educational data obtained from the United States census:

COMPARISON OF THE SAMPLE WITH UNITED STATES CENSUS

<i>Distribution by Educational Levels</i>	<i>4,000 People Interviewed</i>	<i>U. S. Census * Urban and Rural Nonfarm</i>
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
8th grade or less	28	48
1-3 years high school	18	19
4 years high school	25	21
1-3 years college	15	7
4 or more years college	13	5
Total %	99 †	100

* These figures are an adjustment of the 1940 census figures to account for the five-year difference between the census date, April, 1940, and May of 1945, the date of our study. This adjustment took the twenty-five- to twenty-nine-year-old age group from the 1940 census and counted them in slightly lower proportion as thirty to thirty-four years of age today.

† One per cent did not report or foreign education could not be equated.

This indicates the extent to which our sample is distorted in the direction of better-educated people, and by the same token, more frequent book readers. The actual distortion is probably not quite so large as indicated, because here again we have a prestige factor, and people, if anything, tend to exaggerate rather than to underestimate the extent of their education.

The biases discussed, namely the bias toward reading books and the bias toward education, while something of a disturbing element in research of this kind, should be anything but disturbing to the book industry.

D. The Questionnaire as Finally Used

As previously stated, the work of perfecting the consumer questionnaire so as to elicit from respondents as frank, accurate and representative information regarding their book habits as possible, necessitated the preparation and testing of eight revisions of the original, tentative version. The final form of the questionnaire, as used in the field, is reproduced in the following pages. It is upon analysis of the replies to the questions therein set forth that the findings submitted in this report are based.

In the field the questionnaire contained provision for pre-coding responses alongside each question to facilitate punched card tabulation. These have been omitted here for convenience and appearance. In question 1 and similar questions where discrete categories are provided for the interviewer to check the answer, only editing of the material was required to assist the card punch operator in clearly reading the position of the interviewer's check mark. Questions similar to 3(b) required the interviewer to quote the respondent. Such answers were carefully analyzed and suitable codes prepared. The coding of these responses was closely supervised and completed and checked before tabulating cards were punched.

The initials D.K. appearing after many questions are an abbreviation of "don't know." In a few questions the "don't know" response may also be read as "no opinion" or inability to respond. Other abbreviations appearing in the questionnaire are readily understandable.

METHODS USED IN MAKING THE STUDY

CONSUMER QUESTIONNAIRE

INTRODUCTION: We are making a poll or survey about the kinds of things people read these days. I don't want to ask you about every day, only about yesterday. For instance,

1. Yesterday, did you read any newspaper or newspapers? Yes _____
No _____
D.K. _____

(a). About how much time did you spend reading it (them)?

Minutes _____ Hours _____ D.K. _____

2. How about magazines, yesterday did you read any? Yes _____
No _____
D.K. _____

(a). About how much time did you spend reading it (them)?

Minutes _____ Hours _____ D.K. _____

3. Yesterday, did you read any book, I mean any kind of book at all, large or small, with a stiff cloth cover or a 25¢ paper cover—just any book, but not a magazine? Yes _____
No _____
D.K. _____

(a). About how much time did you spend reading it (them)?

Minutes _____ Hours _____ D.K. _____

(b). What were you doing, or where were you while reading this book—were you traveling on train or trolley, listening to the radio, or just what? _____

4. (If NO book in Q. 3) About how long ago were you last reading a book?

_____ days ago; _____ weeks ago; _____ months; _____ years;

_____ D.K.

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5. (For last book read—Q. 3 or 4) What book was it?

Title _____

Author _____

6. (If BIBLE named in Q. 5) Aside from the Bible, what is the last book you were reading?

Title _____

Author _____

- (a). How long ago would you say you were reading that book?

_____Yesterday; _____days ago; _____weeks ago;

_____months; _____years; _____D.K.

7. About how many books do you think you have read during the past month?____; (If none) During the past six months?____; (If none) During the past year?____; D.K._____

8. Is (name of last book read other than Bible) novel or fiction, or is it nonfiction?

Novel____; nonfiction____; both____; D.K._____

9. Just what is that book about, is it a book about any of these subjects? (*Show card and check as many as named*)

War _____ Politics _____

Poetry _____ Travel _____

Religion _____ Humor _____

Science _____ Arts and decoration _____

History _____ Mystery _____

Psychology _____ Biography _____

Adventure _____ Social problems _____

Economics _____ Self-help _____

Or just what? _____

D.K. _____

METHODS USED IN MAKING THE STUDY

10. Did you buy this book, borrow it, or was it a gift?

Buy____; borrow____; gift____; D.K.____

(a). (If bought) Where did you buy it?

Department store _____ Mail-order house _____

Book store _____ Stationery store _____

Book club _____ Drug store _____

Newsstand _____

Or just where?_____

D.K.____

(b). (If borrowed) Where did you borrow it: From public library____; private rental library____; family member____; or a friend?____; D.K.____

(c). (If gift) Who gave it to you?

Family member____; friend?____; D.K.____

11. What made you want to read this book? (Quote fully)

12. Did (will) you read it through or did (will) you read only part of it?

Read it through____; read part____; D.K.____

Comment_____

13. Did that book you read last have a stiff cloth cover____; a leather cover____; or a paper cover____; D.K.____

14. What was the price of that book as nearly as you can tell? 15¢____; 25¢____; 50¢____; 75¢____; \$1.00____; or what?____; D.K.____

15. And how about pictures, were there a great many____; only a few____; or no pictures at all?____; D.K.____

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16. By the way, yesterday did you listen to your radio?

Yes _____

No _____

No radio _____

D.K. _____

- (a). About how much time altogether, throughout the day and evening, did you spend listening to the radio?

Minutes_____Hours_____D.K._____

17. As compared with the number of books you were reading two years ago, are you reading

More_____; fewer_____; or about the same number?_____;

D.K._____

- (a). (If more or fewer) Why would you say you are reading more (fewer) books now than you were two years ago? (Probe and quote fully. If answer is "less time" or "more time" ask:) How do you happen to have less (more) time?

18. Do you think that in the next year or two you will read

More_____; fewer_____; or about the same number of books as you have been reading?_____; D.K._____

- (a). Why do you think you will read more (fewer) books than you have been reading? (Quote fully)

METHODS USED IN MAKING THE STUDY

19. As compared with the books you have been reading, do you think you will read more books with stiff covers of the kind that cost \$1.00 or less, or the kind that cost more than \$1.00?
- | | |
|----------|-------|
| Over \$1 | _____ |
| Less | _____ |
| D.K. | _____ |
- (a). (In either case) Why would you say more stiff cover books at \$1.00 or less (or at more than \$1.00)?
- _____
- _____
20. What are your favorite kinds of books, the books you especially like to read? (If in doubt how to answer, show card for Q. 9)
- _____
- _____
21. Have you a hobby or special interest which leads you to read books on a certain subject?
- | | |
|------|-------|
| Yes | _____ |
| No | _____ |
| D.K. | _____ |
- (a). (If yes) What is your hobby or interest? _____
- (b). About how many books on this subject do you own? _____
- D.K. _____
22. By the way, yesterday did you go to a movie?
- | | |
|------|-------|
| Yes | _____ |
| No | _____ |
| D.K. | _____ |
- (a). About how much time did you spend in the movie?
- Approximate hours _____ D.K. _____
23. Have you ever bought any sets of books, that is, five or more books that go together?
- | | |
|------|-------|
| Yes | _____ |
| No | _____ |
| D.K. | _____ |
- (a). What is the set of books you have bought most recently?
- _____

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(b). For how long have you had it?

Months_____Years_____D.K._____

(c). Have you been pleased with this set or not?

Pleased_____Not pleased_____D.K._____

24. In your home do you have one or more book-cases full of books? Yes _____
No _____

(a). (If yes) How many bookcases?_____

25. About how many books, altogether, are there in your home?
_____D.K._____

26. Are you planning to add new books to your library within the next year? Yes _____
No _____
D.K. _____

(a). (If yes) What kind of books are you planning to add? (Use card for Q. 9 if necessary)

_____D.K. _____

27. Would you mind telling me how far you went in school?
(Check for first two—circle others.)

Less than 8th grade_____8th grade_____

High School 1 2 3 4

College 1 2 3 4

Post Graduate 1 2 3

28. Is there a public library convenient for you to use? Yes _____
No _____
D.K. _____

(a). (If yes) Does it have enough of the kinds of books you want to read? Yes _____ No _____ D.K. _____

METHODS USED IN MAKING THE STUDY

29. Is there a private rental library convenient for you to use? Yes _____
No _____
D.K. _____
30. Do you read the reviews of books or criticisms of books on the book page in your newspapers or magazines?
Regularly_____; sometimes_____; or never?_____; D.K._____
31. Have you bought any new books in the past month to send away to men in the service? Yes _____
No _____
D.K. _____
- (a). (If yes) How many cloth covered_____; paper covered_____?
32. Is there now or has there ever been a book-club membership in your home?
Now_____; formerly_____; never_____; D.K._____
- (a). (If now or formerly) In which book club was it?
_____ D.K. _____
- (b). (If formerly) Why did you give it up?_____

33. What book do you think you will read next?
Title _____
Author _____ D.K. _____
34. Have you ever read "The Return to Religion"? Yes _____
No _____
D.K. _____
- (a). (If yes) Did you buy it_____; borrow it_____; or was it a gift_____? D.K._____
- (b). Was it the stiff cloth cover_____or the paper cover 25¢ edition_____? D.K._____

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35. By the way, would you mind telling me your religious denomination or background?

Age: _____

Man _____; married woman _____; single woman _____

Economic group: A _____ B _____ C _____ D _____

Do you or your family have an automobile? Yes _____
No _____

Occupation _____

Day of week of interview and time

Day _____ A.M. _____ P.M. _____

Interviewed at home _____ Other (specify) _____

Type of house:

One-family _____; two-family _____; apartment _____

NAME _____

Street and number _____

City _____ State _____

III. FINDINGS DERIVED FROM THE STUDY

A. *Book-Reading Habits of the Public*

THE BOOK INDUSTRY is, of course, primarily concerned with the sale of books. There is no dearth of readily accessible sales figures to show which books have sold and in what quantities; what these figures do not show, however, is how and by whom these books were actually read. The true guide to the future of books is the reading habits of people, not the sales figures. The only way to shed light on these unknown quantities is to discover what people's reading habits are, for, in the long run, what people like to read is what they will buy.

This is not always immediately perceptible. Many of the people who read a great deal do much of their reading in schools and libraries, or they read books borrowed from libraries. Conversely, many people who buy books with the intention of reading them, or as visible evidence of "culture" in the home, never do get around to reading them. And some books, of course, are bought as gifts.

But broadly speaking, the underlying influence in the sale of books is the extent to which they are read, or at least desired to be read. In the long run, therefore, it is of primary importance to the book industry to know what books and what types of books people like and want to read, as well as various supplementary characteristics of their reading habits, the competitors for their time and attention, and their preferences in how, why, and where they obtain their books. The

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ensuing findings, derived from information elicited through the use of the foregoing consumer questionnaire, should provide answers to many of these questions.

1. READERS CLASSIFIED BY RECENCY AND FREQUENCY OF BOOK READING

The kinds of people who read books must be defined partly by the number of books they read. Therefore, the data to be treated under this subject are derived from the following questions:

- Q. 3. *Yesterday*, did you read any book, I mean *any* kind of book at all, large or small, with a stiff cloth cover or a twenty-five-cent paper cover—just any book but not a magazine?
- Q. 4. (If no book yesterday) About how long ago were you last reading a book?
- Q. 7. About how many books do you think you have read during the past month (or six months, or during the past year)?

RECENCY OF BOOK READING. On the basis of replies to questions 3 and 4, the following table shows how recently people last read a book:

HOW RECENTLY PEOPLE READ A BOOK

	#	%
Read a book yesterday	845	21
Read a book within a week	397	10
Read a book within a month	740	19
Read a book within a year	846	21
Read a book more than a year ago	494	12
Read a book more than five years ago	678	17
Total	4,000	100

HOW RECENTLY PEOPLE READ A BOOK

ACTIVE
50%

**WITHIN
A MONTH**
19%

**WITHIN
A WEEK**
10%

YESTERDAY
21%

INACTIVE
21%

NON READERS
29%

**WITHIN
A MONTH**

**WITHIN
A YEAR**

**MORE THAN
A YEAR AGO**

FINDINGS DERIVED FROM THE STUDY

For the sake of simplifying subsequent tables and for ease of reference, we shall divide the people interviewed into three major groups, as follows:

1. *Active Readers*—those who read a book yesterday or within the past month, constituting 50 per cent of our population of 4,000;
2. *Inactive Readers*—those who read a book within the past year, constituting 21 per cent of our population;
3. *Nonreaders*—those who have not read a book within one year or, in 17 per cent of the cases, within five years or more, totaling 29 per cent of our population.

FREQUENCY OF BOOK READING. Question 7 inquires how many books people have read during the past month, or the past six months, or the past year. Naturally, they are able to give only approximate answers to such a question, but even so, this should enable us to determine the relative standing of the three reader groups in terms of frequency of readership, and should help us to analyze the character of these groups. Bearing this qualification in mind, the frequency of readership by various groups is shown on the page following.

In the table the active readers are shown separately for those who last read a book yesterday and for those who did not read yesterday but did within the past month. Inactive readers are also broken into two groups.

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AVERAGE NUMBER OF BOOKS READ PER MONTH

	% of People	Average Books per Month	Books per Month #	Books per Month %
By those who read a book yesterday	21	3.9	3,296	70
By those who read a book within a month	29	1.0	1,137	24
By those who read a book within six months	16	.4	256	6
By those who read a book within a year	5	.1	21	*
Those who have not read a book in more than a year, more than five years, or never	29	nearly zero	0	
Total	100		4,710	100

* Less than .5%.

From these answers, even though only approximately accurate, the following conclusions may be drawn:

About 70 per cent of all books are read by 21 per cent of our population, namely those who read a book yesterday.

About 94 per cent of all books are read by 50 per cent of our population, namely those who read a book yesterday or within the past month.

2. WHAT KINDS OF PEOPLE READ BOOKS?

INCOME LEVEL AND EDUCATION AS INFLUENCES ON BOOK READERSHIP. In analyzing what kinds and types of people constitute the active readers, the inactive readers and the nonreaders, it is important to watch for the interrelationships which exist among such characteristics as income level, edu-

FINDINGS DERIVED FROM THE STUDY

cation, age, etc. Education was recorded for each individual interviewed but, it will be remembered, was not predetermined by any quotas or instructions to the interviewers in the field. It is not astonishing that a large proportion of the more educated people was found among the higher-income levels, as can be seen from the table below:

RELATION BETWEEN EDUCATIONAL LEVELS AND
INCOME LEVELS

<i>Educational Level</i>	<i>Income Level</i>		
	<i>Upper</i>	<i>Middle</i>	<i>Lower</i>
	%	%	%
College	53	26	9
High School	37	50	39
Grade School	10	24	52
Total %	100	100	100
Total interviews *	1,188	1,597	1,186

* The twenty-nine people whose educational level was not given are not included.

It is evident from this table that there is a high correlation between education and income level. When the proportions of active readers were examined by income level and education, the following results were obtained:

READERSHIP BY INCOME LEVEL

	<i>Upper</i>	<i>Middle</i>	<i>Lower</i>
	%	%	%
Active readers (within a month)	64	48	36
Inactive readers (within a year)	20	24	19
Nonreaders (more than a year)	16	28	45
Total %	100	100	100
Total interviews	1,194	1,611	1,195

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READERSHIP BY EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

	<i>College</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Grade</i>
	<i>%</i>	<i>School</i>	<i>School</i>
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
Active readers . . .	71	51	25
Inactive readers . . .	19	24	19
Nonreaders	10	25	56
Total %	100	100	100
Total interviews . .	1,151	1,705	1,115

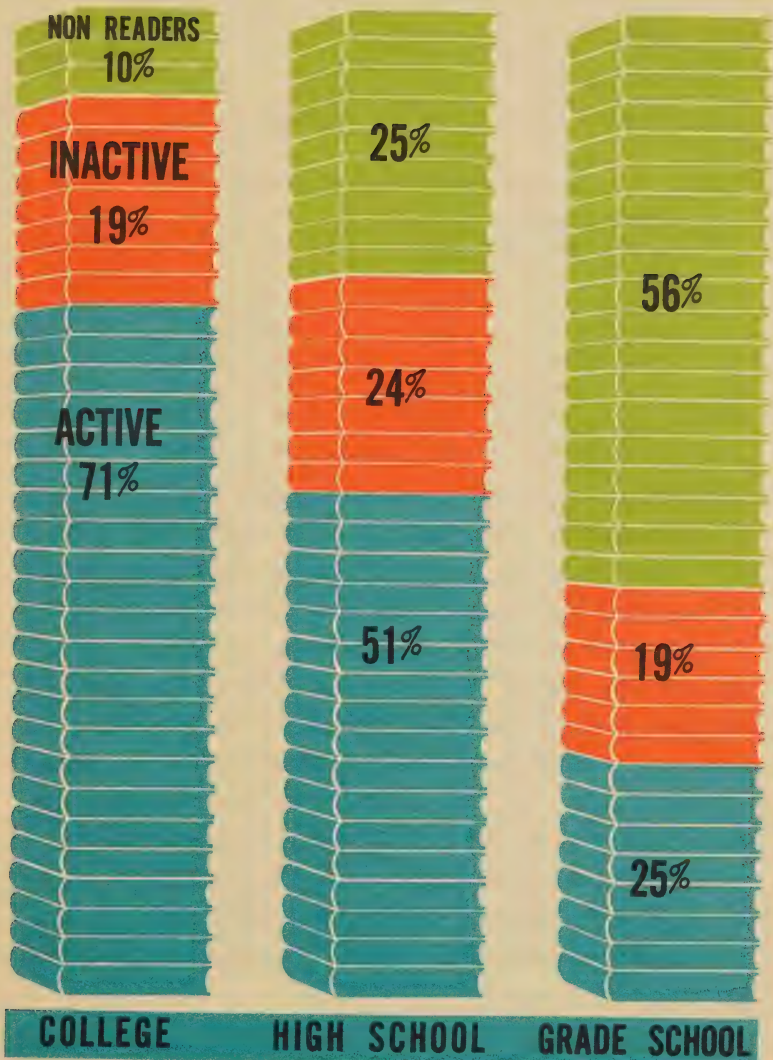
There is a wider difference in the proportion of active readers between college and grade school (71 per cent to 25 per cent) than between the upper-income level and the lower (64 per cent to 36 per cent). From this fact alone it would appear that education is more important than income as an influence, but since these two characteristics of people are so highly correlated, it is desirable to examine them further to determine, if possible, the degree of influence exerted by each.

The three short tables following show, for each income level, proportions of active and inactive readers for each educational level:

READERSHIP BY UPPER-INCOME LEVEL

	<i>College</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Grade</i>
	<i>%</i>	<i>School</i>	<i>School</i>
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
Active readers . . .	73	59	37
Inactive readers . . .	17	22	26
Nonreaders	10	19	37
Total %	100	100	100
Total interviews . .	635	438	115

READERSHIP BY EDUCATIONAL LEVEL



FINDINGS DERIVED FROM THE STUDY

READERSHIP BY MIDDLE-INCOME LEVEL

	<i>College</i>	<i>High School</i>	<i>Grade School</i>
	%	%	%
Active readers . . .	69	50	23
Inactive readers . . .	20	26	23
Nonreaders	11	24	54
Total %	100	100	100
Total interviews . .	421	798	378

READERSHIP BY LOWER-INCOME LEVEL

	<i>College</i>	<i>High School</i>	<i>Grade School</i>
	%	%	%
Active readers . . .	69	46	23
Inactive readers . . .	18	23	16
Nonreaders	13	31	61
Total %	100	100	100
Total interviews . .	95	469	622

The first of these tables shows that in the upper-income group there is less difference in the proportion of active readers among those with college education and those with only grade-school education than was found in the entire sample (73 per cent to 37 per cent active readers as compared to a range of 71 per cent to 25 per cent in the first table on page 60). However, in the middle- and lower-income levels the pattern of readership within educational levels is very close to the over-all pattern.

The readership of books by those who have a college education is practically the same regardless of the income level. The principal difference between income levels is in the increasing proportion of active readers among those with

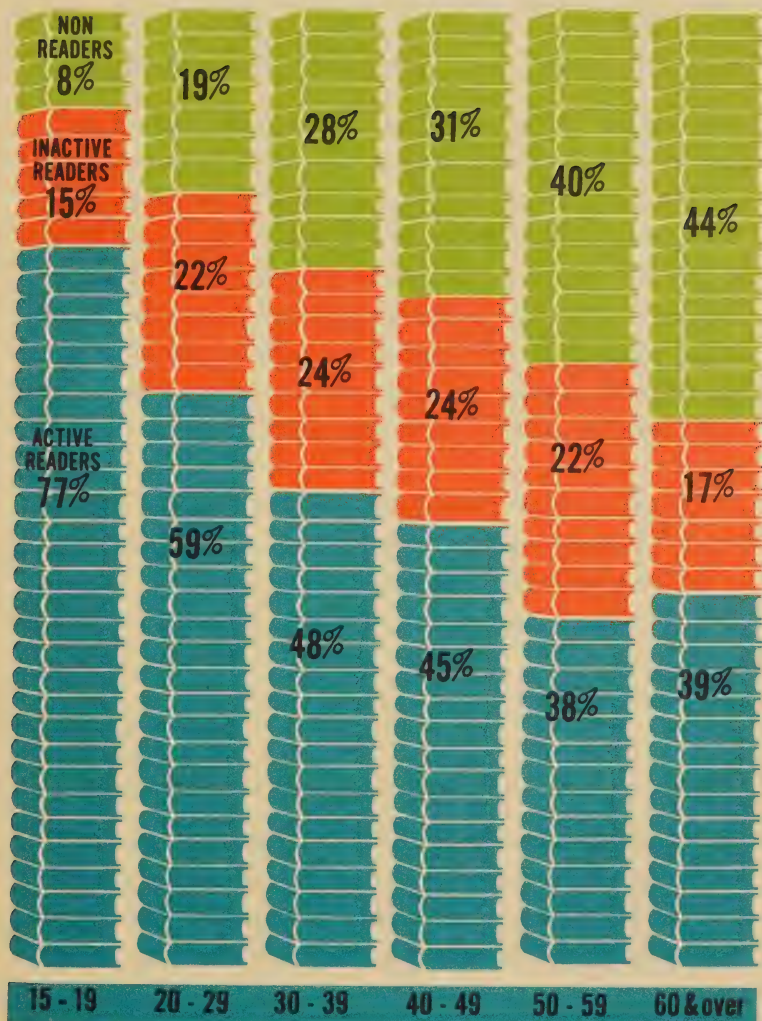
high-school education as we go from lower- to higher-income levels, and a similar trend for people with grade-school education.

This leads to the conclusion that education is a much more important factor influencing the readership of books than income level. But those people of grade-school or high-school education who are of higher-income status tend to increase their reading of books beyond the influence of their education. People at these educational levels, who have succeeded in having a higher-than-average income and standard of living, will usually find themselves in an environment with a considerable proportion of people of college education whose book-reading habits are appreciably more active than theirs. Whether the people of high-school and grade-school education found that they had to read more books to reach a higher-income status, or whether their reading level is an attempt to keep up with their neighbors, cannot be deduced from these data. Whichever of these factors may be operating, it does not detract from the importance of formal education as the foremost influence on the reading of books.

AGE AS AN INFLUENCE ON BOOK READERSHIP. The instructions to interviewers in this study called for the elimination of school textbooks in recording the last book read, particularly for younger people still attending school on a full-time basis. This is an important consideration in evaluating the voluntary readership of books by the fifteen- to nineteen-year-old age group and, to a limited extent, by those in their twenties.

The proportion of active and inactive readers in this study by age groups is shown in the following table:

READERSHIP BY AGE GROUPS



FINDINGS DERIVED FROM THE STUDY

READERSHIP BY AGE GROUPS

	15-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 and Over	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Active readers .	77	59	48	45	38	39	50
Inactive readers .	15	22	24	24	22	17	21
Nonreaders . .	8	19	28	31	40	44	29
Total % . . .	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total interviews	425	746	831	791	586	621	4,000

Superficially, the marked decline in active readers with advancing years and the accompanying sharp increase in non-readers, as shown by this table, might be held to indicate that age is an important factor in reading habits. If this were true, it would be discouraging for the book industry. The significant fact is that the amount of formal education is progressively lower in the older age groups. Census figures indicate that for age groups ranging from the twenties to sixty and over there is a progressive drop in the amount of formal education.

In our sample, just as in the census, younger people are found to have more formal education than older people. The simplest way to show this difference is to state the average number of years of formal education in each age group:

	15-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 and Over	Total
Average number of years of formal education . .	11.2	12.2	11.7	11.0	10.6	10.0	11.2

It is interesting to see that the fifteen- to nineteen-year-old age group, of whom many have not yet completed their education, have already accumulated as many years of formal education as people in their forties, and more than older people.

PEOPLE AND BOOKS

The development of education through the years can be traced most readily by noting, in the past four decennial censuses, the numbers of persons listed as attending grade school, high school and college.

SCHOOL AND COLLEGE ENROLLMENTS FOR 1910-1940 (ooo omitted)

	<i>Grade School</i>	<i>High School</i>	<i>College</i>
1910	18,457	1,111	355
1920	20,864	2,496	598
1930	23,588	4,800	1,101
1940	21,045	7,113	1,493

(From page 218 of the *Statistical Abstract*, 1943.)

In the past twenty-five years (1920 to 1945) the growth in formal education has been rapid both for high-school and college attendance.

If we analyze the reading habits of the group fifty years old and more, by educational levels, we find the following distribution:

READING OF BOOKS BY PEOPLE FIFTY YEARS OF AGE OR OVER BY EDUCATIONAL LEVELS

	<i>Grade School %</i>	<i>High School %</i>	<i>College %</i>	<i>Total %</i>
Active readers	21	45	64	38
Inactive readers	17	23	19	20
Nonreaders	62	32	17	42
Total %	100	100	100	100
Total people fifty years or over	530	393	268	1,207 *

* Sixteen people who did not report their education are included in the total but not in subgroups.

FINDINGS DERIVED FROM THE STUDY

Here, again, the predominant influence of education may be discerned. In this group of older people, three times as many persons of college education, as compared with grade-school level, are found to be active readers; per contra, while non-readers constitute more than three-fifths of the grade-school group, they account for less than one-fifth of the college-educated group.

It is interesting to speculate on the possibilities for book publishing twenty years from now, when the people who are now in their twenties and thirties will have reached their forties and fifties. At that time the average level of education will have been stepped up considerably with the continuation of high standards for the formal education of the youth of the country.

SEX AS AN INFLUENCE ON BOOK READERSHIP. In comparing the book-reading habits of men and women, it is important to remember that the sample included a smaller proportion of men between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five than under normal conditions. (As described in Chapter II, page 38.) Since men and women under forty years of age have been shown to have an appreciably higher level of formal education than those who are older, and also to read books more frequently, the picture here given is undoubtedly distorted in favor of women as active readers; it should be interpreted, therefore, as furnishing only a wartime comparison.

If any subsequent study were undertaken under peacetime conditions, the men then interviewed could be divided into those with and without military service for more complete analysis of both sex and age trends.

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READERSHIP BY SEX

	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Total</i>
	%	%	%
Active readers	46	53	50
Inactive readers	20	22	21
Nonreaders	34	25	29
Total %	100	100	100
Total interviews	1,705	2,295	4,000

RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION OR BACKGROUND AS AN INFLUENCE ON BOOK READERSHIP. Definite but small differences in frequency of readership are found in groups belonging to the principal religious denominations or faiths:

READERSHIP BY RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND

	<i>Protes-</i>	<i>Catholic</i>	<i>Jewish</i>	<i>None or</i>
	<i>tant</i>	%	%	<i>No Answer</i>
	%	%	%	%
Active readers	50	48	53	44
Inactive readers	22	19	19	17
Nonreaders	28	33	28	39
Total %	100	100	100	100
Total interviews	2,773	809	243	175

Of the five factors analyzed in an effort to ascertain just what kinds of people read books—namely: education, income, age, sex, and religious background—answers to the questionnaire leave no doubt that preponderant weight attaches to education. Income level probably ranks second, though this factor and that of age are both overlaid by the influence of education. Religious background seems to play a minor role,

FINDINGS DERIVED FROM THE STUDY

and conclusions regarding sex differentiation cannot be applied with assurance to peace-time conditions.

3. UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES DO THEY READ BOOKS?

As one of the sets of factors affecting the reading of books, it was thought desirable to inquire into the circumstances under which people do their reading. Therefore, the following question was asked of persons who said they had read a book yesterday:

Q. 3(b). What were you doing, or where were you while reading this book—were you traveling on train or trolley, listening to the radio, or just what?

CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH BOOK WAS READ YESTERDAY

	%
Sitting at home; sitting quietly; smoking; just reading . . .	58
In bed; lying down	12
Listening to radio	11
At work	4
On train, bus or trolley	3
Studying	2
In library reading room	2
In school	1
At church	1
Miscellaneous or would not say	6
Total %	100
Total people who read a book yesterday	845

One fact stands out above all others, and that is that reading takes place most often in restful and relaxing circumstances, not to say postures.

PEOPLE AND BOOKS

4. WHAT BOOKS DO THEY READ?

The data on what people read are based on the last book read by both active readers, the 50 per cent of our sample who read a book within the past month, and inactive readers, those who read a book within the past year. The questions were:

Q. 5. (For last book read) What book was it?

Title_____

Author_____

Q. 6. (If BIBLE named in Q. 5) Aside from the Bible, what is the last book you were reading?

Title_____

Author_____

TITLES AND AUTHORS. Of the 1,982 active readers, those who read a book within the past month, all but 128 were able to name a title. Of the 1,340 inactive readers, 422 were unable to name a title. The results are given below by numbers rather than by percentages because all the percentages fall within the narrow range of 0 to 5.

TITLES AND AUTHORS, MAY 21 TO JUNE 8

Titles	Active Readers	Inactive Readers
	#	#
The Bible	95	31
<i>Forever Amber</i> —WINSOR	84	32
<i>A Tree Grows in Brooklyn</i> —SMITH	57	90
<i>The Robe</i> —DOUGLAS	42	50
<i>Brave Men</i> —PYLE	40	16

FINDINGS DERIVED FROM THE STUDY

TITLES AND AUTHORS, MAY 21 TO JUNE 8—(Cont.)

Titles	Active	Inactive
	Readers	Readers
	#	#
<i>Leave Her to Heaven</i> —WILLIAMS	29	15
<i>This Is Your War</i> —PYLE	25	17
<i>Captain from Castile</i> —SHELLABARGER	22	4
<i>Green Dolphin Street</i> —GOUDGE	18	4
<i>Valley of Decision</i> —DAVENPORT	18	6
<i>Great Son</i> —FERBER	15	3
<i>Black Boy</i> —WRIGHT	15	4
<i>Immortal Wife</i> —STONE	13	1
<i>Strange Fruit</i> —SMITH	12	5
<i>China to Me</i> —HAHN	12	1
<i>The Green Years</i> —CRONIN	10	1
<i>Keys of the Kingdom</i> —CRONIN	10	6
<i>Gone with the Wind</i> —MITCHELL	9	44
<i>The Razor's Edge</i> —MAUGHAM	9	4
<i>Strange Woman</i> —WILLIAMS	9	3
<i>Time for Decision</i> —WELLES	9	4
<i>Try and Stop Me</i> —CERF	9	2
<i>Earth and High Heaven</i> —GRAHAM	8	7
<i>Image of Josephine</i> —TARKINGTON	8	1
<i>Pride's Way</i> —MOLLOY	8	—
<i>Young Bess</i> —IRWIN	8	—
<i>The Apostle</i> —ASCH	7	3
<i>Cannery Row</i> —STEINBECK	6	1
Miscellaneous	1,247	563
Don't remember	128	422
Total readers	1,982	1,340

The above figures are, of course, far more significant for the active readers than for the inactive, because, as already shown, the active readers account for 94 per cent of all books read, while the inactive and nonreaders account for only 6 per cent. Among the active readers, 63 per cent of the titles

PEOPLE AND BOOKS

mentioned are shown as miscellaneous, because the frequency of individual books was so small.

THE BIBLE. On the basis of active readers, the Bible was found to be at the head of the list. The frequency or recency of this reading was as follows:

<i>Read the Bible</i>	<i>No. of People</i>	<i>% of 4,000 Sample</i>
Yesterday	44	1.1
Within past week	24	.6
Within past month	27	.7
Within past year	31	.8

In addition, twenty people said they had read the Bible over a year ago, and eighty-four people said it was the last book they had read but didn't remember when. Because of the unique place of the Bible among books, the findings of this study are open to some question. For example, many people read parts of the Bible in responsive readings in their churches on Sundays. Since this has become a routine occurrence, it may or may not come to mind when people are asked what book they have read last. People who read a verse or a chapter of the Bible as a daily routine may also, when asked about the last book read, fail to include the Bible. Nevertheless, as an indication of the conscious reading of the Bible as a book, the findings of this study have considerable significance.

5. WHAT KINDS OF BOOKS DO THEY READ?

Two questions were asked to bring out information on the classification of books read:

Q. 8. Is (name of last book read other than Bible)
novel or fiction, or is it nonfiction?

FINDINGS DERIVED FROM THE STUDY

Q. 9. Just what is that book about, is it a book about any of these subjects? (*Show card* and check as many as named)

War	Adventure	Mystery
Poetry	Economics	Biography
Religion	Politics	Social problems
Science	Travel	Self-help
History	Humor	Or just what?
Psychology	Arts and decoration	

FICTION AND NONFICTION. According to the active readers' own classification as fiction or nonfiction of the last book read, 58 per cent of the books were fiction and 37 per cent nonfiction, 2 per cent were both, and in 3 per cent of the cases people could not answer. By educational groups, these classifications were as follows:

FICTION OR NONFICTION BY EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

	Grade School %	High School %	College %	Total %
Fiction	53	66	51	58
Nonfiction	39	29	45	37
Both	2	2	2	2
Don't remember	6	3	2	3
Total %	100	100	100	100
Number of active readers	274	876	821	1,982 *

* Includes eleven people who did not report their education.

TYPES OF BOOKS. To classify the books read by type from the titles as given would be, as every publisher knows, a difficult task. Therefore, we presented people with an arbitrary classification of types listed on a card, and asked them

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to classify the last book they had read as best they could into one of these types. If none of the given classifications fitted, they were asked to make their own classification.

Out of a total of 1,982 active readers, only 1 per cent were unable to make a classification, and only 12 per cent classified their last book as something other than a type presented to them on the card. It will be seen that many people gave more than one classification for their book. If the classification "Love" or "Romance" had been presented, much fiction would probably have been classified under these headings. As it is, "Adventure" turns out to be the most popular type. This classification was made as an experiment, and as one means of measuring trends by types over a period of time. Here are the details:

TYPES OF LAST BOOKS READ BY EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

<i>Type</i>	<i>Grade School %</i>	<i>High School %</i>	<i>College %</i>	<i>Total %</i>
Adventure	19	21	13	17
War	11	16	18	16
Social problems	9	15	17	15
History	8	15	18	15
Religion	19	13	14	14
Mystery	15	12	7	10
Biography	10	8	13	10
Humor	5	8	8	8
Psychology	2	6	10	7
Travel	3	7	6	6
Science	5	4	7	5
Politics	2	4	7	5
Economics	1	2	4	3
Self-help	3	2	3	3
Poetry	1	2	2	2

FINDINGS DERIVED FROM THE STUDY

TYPES OF LAST BOOKS READ BY EDUCATIONAL LEVEL—(Cont.)

<i>Type</i>	<i>Grade School %</i>	<i>High School %</i>	<i>College %</i>	<i>Total %</i>
Arts and decoration	*	1	2	2
Other things	13	13	10	12
Don't know	3	1	1	1
Total %	<u>129</u>	<u>150</u>	<u>160</u>	<u>151</u>
Total answers	<u>356</u>	<u>1,316</u>	<u>1,320</u>	<u>3,008</u>
Total active readers	274	876	821	1,982 †

* Less than .5%.

† Includes eleven people who did not report their education.

FAVORITE KINDS OF BOOKS. Another approach to the types of books preferred is represented by question 20 in our survey:

Q. 20. What are your favorite kinds of books, the books you especially like to read? (If in doubt how to answer, show card for Q. 9)

When asked in this way, novels and fiction came out first, adventure and mystery second, social problems tenth. The details by educational levels were as follows:

FAVORITE KINDS OF BOOKS BY EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

<i>Type</i>	<i>Grade School %</i>	<i>High School %</i>	<i>College %</i>	<i>Total %</i>
Novels in general; misc. fiction	11	22	20	20
Nonfiction in general; misc. nonfiction	5	3	3	3
Adventure	22	22	15	19

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FAVORITE KINDS OF BOOKS BY EDUCATIONAL LEVEL—(Cont.)

Type	Grade School %	High School %	College %	Total %
Mystery	21	23	14	19
Biography	4	12	20	15
History	11	11	15	13
Religion	20	8	11	10
Humor	8	11	10	10
Travel	7	8	12	9
Romance	5	11	4	7
War	4	7	5	6
Social problems	2	4	9	6
Historical novels	2	4	9	6
Science	6	5	8	6
Psychology	3	3	9	5
Poetry	2	3	7	5
Politics	2	3	4	3
Economics and government	2	2	4	3
Arts and decoration	*	2	5	3
Self-help	1	2	2	2
Sports	1	2	1	1
Don't know; no answer	5	6	9	7
Total %	144	174	196	178
Total answers	395	1,522	1,608	3,538
Total people	274	876	821	1,982 *

* Includes eleven people who did not report their education.

To learn whether type of binding played any part in the choice of books and whether illustrations were a factor, two questions were put:

Q. 13. Did that book you read last have a stiff cloth cover, a leather cover, or a paper cover?

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Q. 15. And how about pictures, were there a great many, only a few, or no pictures at all?

TYPES OF COVERS. Since type of binding is obviously a factor in cost, the answers by income groups have some significance; they are therefore included here with the total answers:

BOOK COVERS BY INCOME LEVELS

Type	Upper %	Middle %	Lower %	Total %
Stiff cloth cover . . .	88	81	74	82
A paper cover	8	13	23	13
A leather cover . . .	2	4	1	3
Don't know	2	2	2	2
Total %	100	100	100	100
Total active readers .	770	782	430	1,982

It was not attempted to translate these answers into prices. The relationship shown, however, i.e., that more paper-covered books are read by persons at the lower-income levels than by those in the higher-income groups is plausible. From a table which appears later in this report, it is seen that books priced at seventy-five cents and less were read by the following percentages in the various income groups:

UPPER	MIDDLE	LOWER
6%	11%	22%

This latter analysis does not indicate, however, whether these low-priced books were bound in paper or cloth.

THE PREVALENCE OF PICTURES. According to 69 per cent of our active readers, the last book they read had no pictures at

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all. Only 28 per cent of the last books read were illustrated. The details were as follows:

THE PREVALENCE OF PICTURES

	%
A great many pictures	8
Only a few pictures	20
No pictures at all	69
Don't know	3
Total %	100
Total active readers	1,982

6. WHERE DO PEOPLE GET THEIR BOOKS?

Our analysis of where people obtain their books is limited to active readers only, that is, the 50 per cent who read a book within the past month. As demonstrated earlier, this represents 94 per cent of all books read, and therefore the great bulk of books, both purchased and borrowed.

People's memories are usually sharpest with respect to the most recent experiences, and hence their answers to the questions put, falling within the memory span of one day to one month, while not completely free from error, have a high degree of reliability. Following are the questions asked:

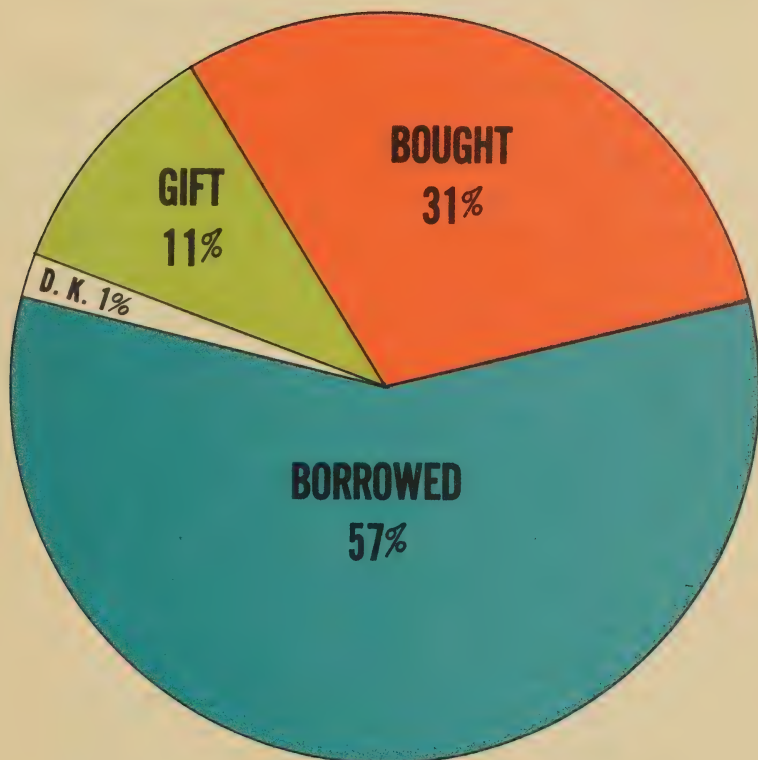
Q. 10. Did you buy this book, borrow it, or was it a gift?

Q. 10(a). (If bought) Where did you buy it?

Q. 10(b). (If borrowed) Where did you borrow it?

Q. 10(c). (If gift) Who gave it to you?

HOW BOOKS WERE OBTAINED BY ACTIVE READERS



FINDINGS DERIVED FROM THE STUDY

HOW BOOKS WERE OBTAINED BY ACTIVE READERS

	#	%
Borrowed	1,119	57
Bought	617	31
Gift	222	11
Don't know	24	1
Total %		100
Total active readers . . .	1,982	

The fact that 57 per cent of the active readers borrowed their last book while 31 per cent bought it may or may not be astonishing. In any case, the relationship between the borrowing and the buying of books is one of great significance for the book industry. Its usefulness would be heightened by succeeding studies designed to show whether the relationship fluctuates in one direction or another, or remains constant with the passage of time.

SOURCES OF BOOKS BY INCOME LEVELS. The proportions who borrow and buy books hold without much change for all three income groups, as may be seen from the following table:

SOURCES OF BOOKS BY INCOME STATUS

	<i>Upper</i> %	<i>Middle</i> %	<i>Lower</i> %
Borrowed	53	59	57
Bought	33	31	29
Gift	13	9	11
Don't know	1	1	3
Total %	100	100	100
Total active readers .	770	782	430

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This is an astonishing result, since the natural inference that in the lowest-income group buying would be much lower than in the upper group and borrowing much higher is not borne out by the findings. On the contrary, buying and borrowing by the active readers in all income groups are approximately in the same proportion. This is consistent with our earlier finding that income is not the dominating influence in the reading of books.

SOURCES OF BOOKS BY AGE GROUPS. The factor of age, on the other hand, does seem to have a direct bearing on the source of books read. The following table shows that book buying increases as people grow older, whereas borrowing decreases:

SOURCES OF BOOKS BY AGE GROUPS

	15-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 and Over	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Borrowed	71	63	55	50	49	46	57
Bought	20	29	36	35	35	32	31
Gift	8	7	8	14	14	20	11
Don't know . . .	1	1	1	1	2	2	1
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total active readers	324	438	398	359	219	244	1,982

This table also indicates that books received as gifts are appreciably more frequent among older people than among younger people.

SOURCES OF BOOKS BY SEX. It has been claimed that women are the principal buyers of books and, according to the present

FINDINGS DERIVED FROM THE STUDY

study, more books are bought by women than by men. Nevertheless, among the active readers covered by the study, a larger proportion of men than of women had purchased the last book read:

BUYING AND BORROWING BY SEX

	<i>Men</i>		<i>Women</i>	
	#	%	#	%
Borrow	381	49	738	61
Buy	283	36	334	28
Gift	107	14	115	10
Don't know	9	1	15	1
Total %		<u>100</u>		<u>100</u>
Total active readers . .	<u>780</u>		<u>1,202</u>	

In attempting to interpret these figures, it must be borne in mind that the absence of young men who were in the armed services necessarily affected our war-time sample. Taking into consideration the curve of book buying by age groups, it is likely that the proportion of book buyers among men would have been lowered had the sample included a greater number of younger men.

No attempt was made to analyze gift books from the standpoint of sex of the purchaser and it is impossible to tell whether men or women are more frequent buyers of gift books, even though the percentage of male recipients ranks higher. Assuming that the donors are evenly divided with respect to sex, women remain the principal buyers of books.

PLACES WHERE BOOKS WERE BOUGHT. In seeking information as to where books are bought, respondents were given an

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opportunity to say just where they purchased the last book read, and a check list of the seven principal sources was provided on the questionnaire for convenience in recording. Variety chain stores were omitted from this list because the term is not widely enough understood.

The place of purchase varies considerably by income groups, as may be seen from the table:

PLACE OF PURCHASE BY INCOME STATUS

<i>Place</i>	<i>Upper</i>	<i>Middle</i>	<i>Lower</i>	<i>Total</i>
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
Book store	36	32	22	32
Book club	26	22	12	22
Department store	15	11	10	12
Newsstand	3	6	13	6
Drug store	3	5	12	6
Mail-order house	7	3	6	5
Stationery store	1	3	2	2
At school	1	2	3	2
Miscellaneous sources	7	14	18	12
Don't know	1	2	2	1
Total %	100	100	100	100
Total purchasers among active readers	252	239	126	617

Book stores and clubs are by far the most frequent sources in the upper-income group, but tend to be less so in the lower-income groups. Newsstands and drug stores are most frequently patronized by the lower-income groups; it will be seen later that these places of purchase are related to lower-priced, reprint editions.

Miscellaneous sources also show a consistent increase as we go down the income scale. Variety chain stores are un-

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doubtedly included in the miscellaneous group, though only a few people named the variety chain store in identifiable terms.

The purchase of books through schools is heavily weighted by the fifteen- to nineteen-year-old age group, who have obtained books other than their regular textbooks from the school. However, there is a small representation of people in all other age groups who purchased their last book through schools. This may mean that the purchasers obtained the books for adult education courses of various kinds and types.

An analysis of the place of purchase by age levels indicates that book clubs are more frequently the source of the last book read by people in their twenties and thirties than in any other age level.

It is also of interest to note the difference in the places of purchase by men and women:

PLACE OF PURCHASE BY SEX

	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
Book store	32	32
Book club	14	29
Department store	10	14
Newsstand	8	4
Drug store	8	3
Mail-order house	7	4
Stationery store	1	2
At school	4	1
Miscellaneous	14	10
Don't know	2	1
Total %	100	100
Total purchasers	283	334

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The most important difference here is with respect to book clubs and department stores, which women patronize more widely than men.

From a merchandising point of view, it may be of value to determine how the size of urban centers affects the place of purchase. In the following table some of the samples are too small for a high degree of reliability, but they indicate the desirability of analyzing a larger sample in some future study. The results are based only on the active readers who bought their last book (617).

PLACE OF PURCHASE BY CITY-SIZE

	500,000 and Over	100,000- 500,000	25,000- 100,000	2,500- 25,000	Under * 2,500
	%	%	%	%	%
Book store . . .	26	27	33	37	36
Book club . . .	17	22	28	22	24
Department store .	21	12	12	7	8
Newsstand . . .	10	7	3	2	8
Drug store . . .	4	7	6	5	6
Mail-order house .	3	6	4	7	6
Stationery store . .	†	5	1	4	†
At school . . .	4	1	2	2	1
Miscellaneous . .	14	12	9	13	9
Don't know . . .	1	1	2	1	2
Total % . . .	100	100	100	100	100
Total purchasers .	171	83	97	135	131

* Rural nonfarm population in small incorporated towns and villages.

† Less than .5%.

It is quite consistent with distribution of department stores to find that they are a much more important source of purchase in larger cities than in smaller ones.

No analysis by city-size has been shown of the proportions

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of people who borrowed, bought, or received as a gift the last book read, because no significant variations were inherent in the data.

WHERE PEOPLE BORROW THEIR BOOKS. Just as there are differences in the places where people buy their books, so are there in the sources from which they borrow them. What these differences are as between men and women is shown in the following table:

WHERE BOOKS WERE BORROWED BY SEX

	<i>Men</i>		<i>Women</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Family member or						
friend	183	48	397	54	580	51
Public library	165	43	244	33	409	37
Private rental library .	30	8	94	13	124	11
Don't know	3	1	3	*	6	1
Total %		100		100		100
Total borrowers . . .	381		738		1,119	

* Less than .5%.

The greater proportion of men withdrawing books from the public libraries may be attributable to a greater need by them for books on technical subjects; such books would more often be available at a public library than from a private rental library. Private rental libraries are more apt to cater to women by locating in shopping centers or areas, and by stocking largely fiction.

Public libraries are much more often the sources from which the fifteen- to nineteen-year-old group borrows books, as shown in the following table:

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WHERE BOOKS WERE BORROWED BY AGE GROUPS

	15-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 and Over	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Family member or friend . . .	31	57	56	60	58	53	51
Public library .	61	33	28	27	28	36	37
Private rental library . . .	8	10	16	12	14	9	11
Don't know . .	—	*	*	1	—	2	1
Total % . .	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total borrowers .	228	274	219	179	107	112	1,119

There appear to be some rather wide differences in sources for borrowing books in the major areas of the country:

WHERE BOOKS WERE BORROWED BY GEOGRAPHIC AREAS

	East		Midwest		South		Far West	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Family member or friend	187	47	158	52	152	59	83	51
Public library . .	127	32	119	39	91	35	72	45
Private rental library	83	21	24	8	13	5	4	3
Don't know . . .	1	*	2	1	2	1	1	1
Total % . .		100		100		100		100
Total borrowers	398		303		258		160	

* Less than .5%.

The principal point to be noted here is the much wider development of private rental libraries in the eastern states as compared with the other areas of the country. This fact brings to the fore the question of the effect of rental libraries

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on the purchase of books. Do the people in the eastern states buy fewer books, or do we find more active readers in the eastern states, so that while they buy as many as people in other areas, they borrow more?

The key to this question may be found by analyzing relative proportions of active readers in the four areas:

READERSHIP BY GEOGRAPHIC AREAS

	<i>East</i>		<i>Midwest</i>		<i>South</i>		<i>Far West</i>	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Active readers . . .	717	54	563	46	425	46	277	53
Inactive and Nonreaders . . .	618	46	657	54	500	54	243	47
Total % . . .	<u>100</u>		<u>100</u>		<u>100</u>		<u>100</u>	
Total interviews	1,335		1,220		925		520	

From this analysis, it is evident that the eastern and far western states have appreciably more active readers, proportionately, than the midwestern or southern states. Further analysis of the sources of books by areas, basing our data upon the active readers, produces the following table:

SOURCES OF BOOKS BY GEOGRAPHIC AREAS

	<i>East</i>		<i>Midwest</i>		<i>South</i>		<i>Far West</i>	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Borrowed . . .	398	55	303	53	258	61	160	58
Bought	229	32	191	34	115	27	82	29
Gift	78	11	66	12	45	10	33	12
Don't know . .	12	2	3	1	7	2	2	1
Total % . . .	<u>100</u>		<u>100</u>		<u>100</u>		<u>100</u>	
Total active readers . . .	<u>717</u>		<u>563</u>		<u>425</u>		<u>277</u>	

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The relatively higher proportion of active readers in eastern states suggests that the greater use of private rental libraries in these states is no detriment to the purchase of books.

THE ACCESSIBILITY OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE RENTAL LIBRARIES. In view of the large extent to which books are borrowed, some information with regard to public and private lending libraries was thought desirable. The questions asked were as follows:

- Q. 28. Is there a public library convenient for you to use?
Q. 28(a). (If yes) Does it have enough of the kinds of books you want to read?
Q. 29. Is there a private rental library convenient for you to use?

A considerable difference between public and private lending libraries was found. Fewer people said that private lending libraries were convenient, and many did not know whether there was a conveniently located private rental library. Here is a summary of the answers:

ACCESSIBILITY OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Eighty-two per cent said a public library was convenient.

Fourteen per cent said a public library was not convenient.

Four per cent did not know.

In answer to the question, "Does it have enough of the kinds of books you want to read?" the information elicited was as follows:

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Fifty-nine per cent answered yes.

Seven per cent answered no.

Thirty-four per cent could not answer or did not know.

The accessibility of private rental libraries was said to be as follows:

ACCESSIBILITY OF PRIVATE RENTAL LIBRARIES

Fifty-seven per cent said such a library was convenient.

Thirty per cent said such a library was not convenient.

Thirteen per cent did not know.

There were some interesting differences in the accessibility of public and private libraries by geographic areas, as shown in the table below:

ACCESSIBILITY OF LIBRARIES BY AREAS

<i>Public Library</i>				
<i>Convenient</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>Midwest</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>Far West</i>
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	78	91	71	86
No	15	7	25	11
Don't know	7	2	4	3
Total %	100	100	100	100
Total interviews .	1,335	1,220	925	520
 <i>Private Rental Library</i>				
<i>Convenient</i>				
Yes	60	62	47	52
No	25	25	42	34
Don't know	15	13	11	14
Total %	100	100	100	100
Total interviews .	1,335	1,220	925	520

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In the South, it seems, people find public libraries less accessible than in other regions; private rental libraries appear to be less conveniently located in the South and in the Far West.

Differences in the accessibility of libraries of both kinds to groups on various income levels are appreciable, as shown in the following tables:

ACCESSIBILITY OF LIBRARIES BY INCOME LEVELS

<i>Public Library Convenient</i>	<i>Upper</i> %	<i>Middle</i> %	<i>Lower</i> %
Yes	86	85	72
No	12	11	20
Don't know	2	4	8
Total %	100	100	100
Total interviews	1,194	1,611	1,195

<i>Private Rental Library Convenient</i>			
Yes	69	59	42
No	24	29	37
Don't know	7	12	21
Total %	100	100	100
Total interviews	1,194	1,611	1,195

Public libraries seem to be most accessible in cities with a population of from 2,500 to 100,000. They are somewhat less accessible in cities of more than 500,000 population. Even in towns with a population of less than 2,500, the accessibility of a public library is remarkably high. The findings are as follows:

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ACCESSIBILITY OF LIBRARIES BY CITY-SIZE

<i>Public Library</i> <i>Convenient</i>	500,000 and Over	100,000— 500,000	25,000— 100,000	2,500— 25,000	Under 2,500
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	80	77	87	90	75
No	10	17	10	8	23
Don't know	10	6	3	2	2
Total %	100	100	100	100	100
Total interviews	891	612	588	855	1,054

Private Rental Library *Convenient*

Yes	63	62	65	58	43
No	19	21	24	28	49
Don't know	18	17	11	14	8
Total %	100	100	100	100	100
Total interviews	891	612	588	855	1,054

Private rental libraries, as seen in the table, become less accessible with decrease in city-size below a population of 25,000.

MEMBERSHIP IN BOOK CLUBS. The tremendous growth of book clubs in recent years has been an outstanding phenomenon of the book industry. In our study the following questions relating to book-club memberships were asked:

Q. 32. Is there now or has there ever been a book-club membership in your home?

Q. 32(a). (If now or formerly) In which book club was it?

Q. 32(b). (If formerly) Why did you give it up?

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Of our total sample, 69 per cent said they had never had a book-club membership, 13 per cent had had one formerly but not now, and 14 per cent had a current membership. The remaining 4 per cent could not answer.

Analysis of book-club memberships by educational levels reveals particularly interesting results:

BOOK-CLUB MEMBERSHIP BY EDUCATIONAL LEVELS

<i>Book-Club Membership in the Home</i>	<i>Grade School %</i>	<i>High School %</i>	<i>College %</i>	<i>Total %</i>
Now	5	13	25	14
Formerly	4	13	22	13
Never	85	72	51	69
Don't know	6	2	2	4
Total %	100	100	100	100
Total interviews . . .	1,115	1,705	1,151	4,000 *

* The total includes twenty-nine people for whom educational level was not given.

While even in the college-trained group over half the persons interviewed had never belonged to a book club, it is apparent that education is a major factor affecting such membership. Taking into consideration both current and former memberships, the percentage of membership among the high-school and college populations is roughly three and five times as great, respectively, as among the grade-school group.

Five book clubs of national scope were named, in addition to local and miscellaneous clubs. However, the preponderance of memberships, both present and former, is accounted for by two leading clubs. The full list of clubs mentioned, with percentages of present and former memberships, is as follows:

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CLUBS SUBSCRIBED TO

<i>Name of Club</i>	<i>Present Member %</i>	<i>Former Member %</i>
Book-of-the-Month Club	48	53
Literary Guild	22	12
Doubleday, Doran \$ Book Club	6	4
Sears' People's Book Club	4	1
Book League of America	2	1
Local book clubs †	4	5
Miscellaneous book clubs	8	5
Don't remember names ‡	12	22
Total %	106 *	103 *
Total answers	596	536
Total homes having book-club membership	565	518

*Total answers add up to more than 100 per cent as some people belong(ed) to more than one book club.

† Represents book clubs run by local stores.

‡ Many of the individuals questioned were not themselves members of clubs and would not necessarily know the names of them.

In view of the high percentages of persons who had formerly belonged to book clubs but had for some cause discontinued their memberships, a breakdown of the reasons given is of interest. Chief among them is dissatisfaction with the selections offered. In detail the reasons given were as follows:

REASONS FOR GIVING UP MEMBERSHIP

	<i>%</i>
Didn't like selection of books	27
Didn't have time to read the books	15
Moved away; family member moved away	13
Too expensive, didn't have the money	10
Book club was disbanded; membership expired; set was completed	6

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REASONS FOR GIVING UP MEMBERSHIP—(Cont.)

	%
A nuisance; took too much time to send in choice	4
Member went into service	3
Didn't get money's worth; felt cheated	2
Don't have to own the books; can get books from library or borrow from friends	3
Traveled too much	2
Miscellaneous reasons	4
Don't know; no reasons given	11
Total %	100
Total persons giving up book membership	518

GIFT BOOKS, ETC. It will be recalled that 11 per cent of active readers stated that they had received their last book as a gift. In answer to the question, "Who gave it to you?" the variety of cousins, aunts and uncles mentioned was so great that no detailed tabulation would be significant. However, 48 per cent of the 222 gift books came from a member of the family or near relative, while 50 per cent came from friends, 2 per cent being reported as uncertain.

It has already been suggested that since gift books are not borrowed but purchased, they may be regarded as a subdivision of books that are bought. Nevertheless, an important distinction must be observed here, for it is apparent that any one book may be given away several times, thus constituting a series of gifts, while representing only a single sale. It is for this reason that we have kept the gift classification separate from either "borrowed" or "bought," leaving it to interpretation to determine its bearing on the latter group.

Of all active readers, 1 per cent replied to the questionnaire by stating they did not know where they obtained the

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last book purchased. At first blush this may appear to be a rather unenlightened response, and yet after some consideration it is understandable. A book may be purchased or borrowed by one member of the family, left lying around and picked up by another member so casually that he never stops to inquire where it came from or how it happens to be in the home. Or, a reader may forget just where he picked up the last book read, particularly if three or four weeks have elapsed since finishing it. In any case, the percentage of such replies was so small as to be inconsequential.

7. WHAT DO PEOPLE PAY FOR THEIR BOOKS?

Information gathered regarding the prices paid for books is based on the cost of the last book read by active readers, i.e., within the past month. The question asked to elicit this information was phrased as follows:

Q. 14. What was the price of that book as nearly as you can tell? 15¢; 25¢; 50¢; 75¢; \$1.00; or what?

By regarding as significant only the answers made by active readers, the number of people is reduced to 50 per cent of the sample. However, the accuracy of the answers is greatly enhanced, because natural lapses of memory on a point of this kind are apt to multiply with the passage of any longer period. Besides, it will be recalled that although active readers represent only half of the sample population, they account for 91 per cent of books read.

Only 31 per cent of those who read a book within the

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month had purchased that book; the remainder had borrowed it or received it as a gift. Because it was thought that persons in these latter categories would have a fairly good idea of the approximate prices of the books they had been reading, the question was asked of all active readers, regardless of whether they had bought or borrowed the latest book, or received it as a gift. The following table gives the prices named by those who bought their books as compared with those who did not buy:

THE PRICE OF BOOKS READ

<i>Price of Books</i>	<i>Bought %</i>	<i>Not Bought %</i>	<i>Total %</i>
\$.15	1	1	1
.25	12	5	7
.50	3	1	2
.75	2	2	2
1.00	13	12	13
1.50	6	7	6
2.00	15	16	15
2.50	20	22	21
3.00	11	11	11
3.50 to \$4.00	6	4	5
Over \$4.00	6	17	14
Don't know	5	2	3
Total %	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>
Total active readers . . .	617	1,365	1,982

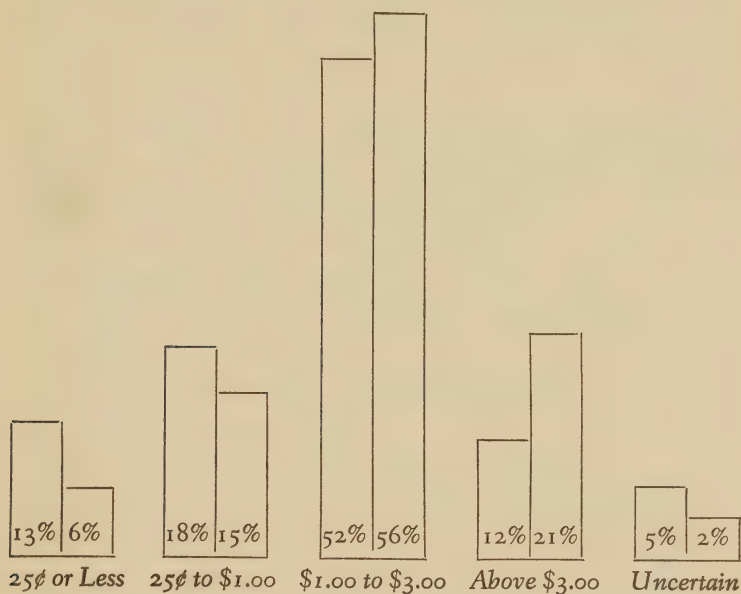
It is a striking fact that 25 per cent of all last books read by active readers were said to have cost \$1.00 or less. Books costing from \$1.00 up to and including \$3.00 represented 53 per cent.

Both price distribution and price differences as between buyers and nonbuyers are illustrated in the following chart:

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PRICE OF LAST BOOK READ BY 1,982 ACTIVE READERS

Thirty-one per cent of whom bought the book, the rest of whom borrowed or received it as a gift. Bar at the left represents buyers and bar at the right borrowers.



The ratio of buyers to nonbuyers should be noted at the various price levels shown in the table. Books selling for fifty cents or less are more often bought than borrowed. Books selling for \$4.00 or more are borrowed about three times as often as they are purchased. With these understandable exceptions, the chart shows that the prices reported by nonbuyers correspond closely to those reported by buyers. This agreement suggests that the prices named by the people who did not buy

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their books are almost as reliable as those given by the people who did. One of the principal publishers of twenty-five-cent reprint editions has estimated that all books of this type represent 12 to 14 per cent of all books published. When the people in our sample report that 13 per cent of the books they bought were priced from fifteen to twenty-five cents, it is an interesting confirmation of the validity of the sample at this point.

BOOK PRICES BY INCOME GROUPS. As might have been expected, the prices of the books read by the 1,982 active readers vary by income groups. As in the case of the preceding table, the one which follows represents active readers and the last book read; however, no separation has been made between books purchased and borrowed:

PRICE OF BOOKS READ BY INCOME GROUPS

<i>Price</i>	<i>Upper</i> %	<i>Middle</i> %	<i>Lower</i> %
\$.75 and under	6	11	22
1.00	11	12	16
1.50	6	6	8
2.00	18	17	9
2.50	24	22	16
3.00	14	10	6
3.50 to \$4.00	6	5	4
Over \$4.00	12	14	17
Don't know	3	3	2
Total %	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>
Total active readers . . .	770	782	430

This table shows strikingly the sharp differences in the prices of books read by the various income groups. Books costing

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seventy-five cents or less were read by only 6 per cent of persons in the upper-income group, but by 22 per cent in the lower-income group. The reverse relation exists with respect to books priced between \$1.00 and \$4.00, the upper-income group reporting 79 per cent and the lower group 59 per cent. In this connection it should be remembered that the proportion of active readers in the upper- and middle-income groups is considerably higher than in the lower group. Therefore, the actual advantage of the cheaper books is not nearly so large as the differences in the percentages by income groups would seem to indicate, while the advantage of the higher-priced books, on the other hand, is greater.

CHEAPER VERSUS MORE EXPENSIVE BOOKS. The great increase in lower-priced books in recent years has demonstrated the importance of this market, but does not answer the question of future trends. To do so, one must either have all the pertinent facts over a period of time, or make successive studies such as the present one, which will reveal changes in people's reading habits from year to year on the basis of comparable samples. The present study, representing a point in time, does not measure any trend. However, since the question is an important one, we sought to shed as much light on it as possible in a single study. To this end, the following questions were asked of respondents:

- Q. 19. As compared with the books you have been reading, do you think you will read more books with stiff covers of the kind that cost \$1.00 or less, or the kind that cost more than \$1.00?

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Q. 19(a). (In either case) Why would you say more stiff cover books at \$1.00 or less (or at more than \$1.00)?

If there were an extremely sharp and sudden trend in the making, people's answers to these questions might give us a clue. In point of fact, their answers distributed themselves as follows:

Fifty-eight per cent of active readers said they would read more books costing over \$1.00.

Twelve per cent said they would read more books costing \$1.00 or less.

Thirty per cent said they did not know.

Fewer people, it will be noted, say that they are planning to read lower-priced books than are reading them at present, 12 per cent as compared with 25 per cent (see table, page 94). Even the lower-income group expresses the intention to read fewer books at \$1.00 or less than it now reads, namely 23 per cent against 38 per cent (see table below).

PRICE PREFERENCE BY INCOME GROUPS

<i>Price Range</i>	<i>Upper %</i>	<i>Middle %</i>	<i>Lower %</i>
Over \$1.00	68	59	39
\$1.00 or less	7	11	23
Don't know	25	30	38
Number of interviews .	770	782	430

REASONS FOR READING CHEAPER OR HIGHER-PRICED BOOKS.

The reasons that people give for their price preferences may

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have considerable significance. They show that such preferences are not based entirely on economy, but often on reasons which can be appealed to by the makers of both the lower-priced and the higher-priced books. The principal reasons given are tabulated below:

REASONS FOR PREFERRING BOOKS COSTING OVER \$1.00

	%
Likes them better; better books; only read good books . . .	22
Better books are more expensive; no good books can be bought for less	16
More books over \$1.00 are available; better selection in public or lending libraries	11
Kind liked don't come in paper covers or cheaper editions .	9
Best sellers are first published at higher prices	8
Better to keep; trying to build own library	7
Accustomed to buying (reading) them	6
Print is better; paper, etc., is better	6
Doesn't like paper-covered books	3
Nicer to read; easier to read	1
Miscellaneous reasons	5
Doesn't know why prefers books costing over \$1.00 . . .	6
Total %	100
Total answers	1,160

REASONS FOR PREFERRING BOOKS COSTING \$1.00 AND LESS

	%
Cheaper; can't afford more expensive books	29
Just as good books are published at lower prices	17
Easier to find to buy	7
Easier to hold	6
They take less time to read	4
Miscellaneous reasons	26
Doesn't know why prefers books costing \$1.00 or less . .	11
Total %	100
Total answers	235
	99

PRICE PREFERENCES BY FICTION VERSUS NONFICTION. The proportions of fiction and nonfiction read by active readers are about 58 per cent of the former to 37 per cent of the latter (5 per cent were doubtful). There do not appear to be any significant differences in these preferences at the various price levels, except at the upper and lower limits of the price range. For example, in the fifteen- and twenty-five-cent class, the proportion of fiction to nonfiction is as 75 per cent to 25 per cent. The variation at the other extreme, the \$3.50 and over group, is also large enough to be fairly significant, namely 31 per cent fiction to 69 per cent nonfiction.

8. TO WHAT EXTENT DO PEOPLE OWN BOOKS AND LIBRARIES?

The subject of home libraries is extensive enough to constitute a study by itself, but it was thought that the present survey would not be complete without giving some attention to it. After all, though the presence of a library does not necessarily mean the presence of active book readers in the home, there must, in the long run, be a considerable connection between ownership and readership of books. Moreover, it is conceivable that the development of libraries in the home may, with an expanding economy, become a fashion or a vogue, or still better, a universal custom of our culture. Aside from the promotion of encyclopedias, probably the outstanding campaign to sell a library is that represented by Dr. Eliot's "Five-Foot Shelf." It is quite conceivable that books may yet be sold on a large scale as libraries of various kinds rather than as individual books.

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The ideal procedure for ascertaining the ownership of books would have been to make an actual inventory of the books and bookcases in each home. This would have cost time and money far beyond the scope of the present study. Therefore, the information on these points was obtained by questions, with results approximately, if not entirely, accurate.

Since the word "library" has so broad a meaning, we found it necessary to interrogate people in more specific terms. Use of the word "bookcase" was found to be practical, and the first questions asked were as follows:

Q. 24. In your home do you have one or more bookcases full of books?

Q. 24(a). (If yes) How many bookcases?

Q. 25. About how many books, altogether, are there in your home?

The over-all percentage of our sample having no bookcases at all was thirty-five, and this ranged from 59 per cent in the lower-income group to 15 per cent in the upper-income group. The details, by the three principal income groups and by total, are as follows:

PRESENCE OF BOOKCASES BY INCOME LEVEL

<i>Number of Bookcases</i>	<i>Upper Middle Lower</i>			<i>Total</i>
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
No bookcases in home	15	33	59	35
1 bookcase	23	33	24	27
2 bookcases	23	18	10	17
3 bookcases	15	8	2	8
4 bookcases	8	2	1	4

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PRESENCE OF BOOKCASES BY INCOME LEVEL—(Cont.)

<i>Number of Bookcases</i>	<i>Upper Middle Lower</i>			<i>Total</i>
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
5 bookcases	5	1	*	2
6 bookcases	3	1	*	2
7 bookcases	1	*	—	*
8-10 bookcases	1	*	—	1
Over 10 bookcases	2	*	*	1
Don't know how many bookcases; no answer	4	3	4	3
Total %	100	100	100	100
Total interviews	1,194	1,611	1,195	4,000

* Less than .5%.

This is a subject regarding which it seems reasonable to expect marked differences by income groups, not so much because of differences in readership as because of the cost of bookcases and, still more, the space they require. Even so, the differences by educational groups are still greater, ranging from 61 per cent who have no bookcase among grade-school respondents, to 12 per cent among respondents who went to college. The exact returns are set forth below:

PRESENCE OF BOOKCASES BY EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

<i>Number of Bookcases</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>College</i>
	<i>School</i>	<i>School</i>	
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
No bookcases	61	35	12
1 bookcase	22	33	23
2 bookcases	10	18	23
3 bookcases	2	7	16
4 bookcases	1	2	10

FINDINGS DERIVED FROM THE STUDY

PRESENCE OF BOOKCASES BY EDUCATIONAL LEVEL—(Cont.)

<i>Number of Bookcases</i>	<i>Grade School %</i>	<i>High School %</i>	<i>College %</i>
5 bookcases	*	1	5
6 bookcases	*	1	3
7 bookcases	*	—	1
8-10 bookcases	—	*	1
Over 10 bookcases	*	1	2
Don't know how many bookcases	4	2	4
Total %	100	100	100
Total interviews	1,115	1,705	1,151

* Less than .5%.

NUMBER OF BOOKS IN THE HOME. Since the size and capacity of bookcases vary, and as it was impractical to measure them individually, we were compelled to ask people to give an approximation of the number of books they had in the home. Whereas 35 per cent of our sample said definitely that they had no bookcases in the home, only 25 per cent admitted that they had no books or maintained that they could not, or in many cases would not, give an estimate of the number. The lack of co-operation of this latter group was often due to reluctance to admit how few books they had. Details of the replies to this question, by income groups and by total, are as follows:

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF BOOKS IN THE HOME

<i>Number of Books</i>	<i>Upper %</i>	<i>Middle %</i>	<i>Lower %</i>	<i>Total %</i>
Less than 50 books	14	28	40	27
50-99 books	11	18	12	14
100-199 books	18	15	8	14

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ESTIMATED NUMBER OF BOOKS IN THE HOME—(Cont.)

<i>Number of Books</i>	<i>Upper %</i>	<i>Middle %</i>	<i>Lower %</i>	<i>Total %</i>
200-299 books	14	8	4	8
300-399 books	8	3	1	4
400-499 books	3	2	1	2
500-599 books	5	2	1	3
600-999 books	3	1	*	1
1000 and more books . . .	5	1	1	2
No books	*	1	6	3
Don't know how many books	19	21	26	22
Total %	100	100	100	100
Total interviews	1,194	1,611	1,195	4,000

* Less than .5%.

9. SETS OF BOOKS IN THE HOME

A set of books in the home does not constitute a library, but may very well be the foundation of one. The famous "Five-Foot Shelf" is a set of books and yet, in a sense, a small library. Just what constitutes a set of books? For purposes of this survey we decided on an arbitrary definition, namely "Five or more books that go together." Four questions were asked in this part of the study:

- Q. 23. Have you ever bought any sets of books, that is, five or more books that go together?
- Q. 23(a). What is the set of books you have bought most recently?
- Q. 23(b). For how long have you had it?
- Q. 23(c). Have you been pleased with this set or not?

Of our total sample of 4,000 people, 64 per cent said they had never bought a set of books, 34 per cent said they had, and 2 per cent could not answer. In the table below, the results are analyzed by income level:

FINDINGS DERIVED FROM THE STUDY

SETS OF BOOKS PURCHASED

	Upper %	Middle %	Lower %	Total %
Has bought a set of books . . .	49	34	20	34
Has never bought a set of books	50	65	77	64
Does not know whether bought a set of books or not . . .	1	1	3	2
Total %	100	100	100	100
Total interviews	1,194	1,611	1,195	4,000

Of those who had bought sets, all but 8 per cent were able to name the set most recently purchased. The answers are shown in the table, by income groups and by total, for the principal sets of books purchased:

KINDS OF SETS PURCHASED

	Upper %	Middle %	Lower %	Total %
<i>Encyclopaedia Britannica</i>	10	9	5	8
<i>Compton's Pictorial Encyclopedia</i>	3	4	2	3
Other encyclopedias	19	26	25	23
Collected works of authors	14	14	13	14
Sets of children's books (Nancy Drew, Little Colonel, etc.)	2	2	3	2
<i>Book of Knowledge</i>	6	7	4	6
<i>World Book</i>	3	3	1	3
<i>Wonderland of Knowledge</i>	1	1	2	1
<i>The Wonderworld</i>	1	*	*	1
<i>The Bookhouse</i>	2	1	*	1
Other informative sets for children	3	4	3	4
Religion	3	2	5	3
Business and economics	3	3	2	3
Miscellaneous sets of books	21	17	25	20
Bought set but do not remember name	9	7	10	8
Total %	100	100	100	100
Total sets bought	581	546	245	1,372

* Less than .5%.

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Encyclopedias are by far the most common, but by no means the only, kind of sets. Sets of children's books are important, as are sets of books on religion, business and, especially, collected works of authors.

WHEN LATEST SET WAS PURCHASED. About 43 per cent of all sets were bought more than five years ago. The details are as follows:

HOW LONG AGO LATEST SET WAS BOUGHT

	<i>Total %</i>
Less than 6 months ago	5
6-11 months ago	3
1 year or more ago	8
2 years ago	8
3 years ago	7
4-5 years ago	17
6-7 years ago	7
8-10 years ago	13
10-20 years ago	17
Over 20 years ago	6
Don't remember when bought	9
Total %	100
Total owners of sets	1,372

WHAT PEOPLE THINK OF SETS. In answer to the question, "Have you been pleased with this set or not?" 86 per cent replied that they had been pleased, 6 per cent that they had not been pleased, and 8 per cent did not know or could not say.

In view of this general reaction of satisfaction with sets, the fact that many people have not bought a set within five years, the growing interest in books generally, and the rising

FINDINGS DERIVED FROM THE STUDY

levels of buying power in the middle- and lower-income groups, it does not seem unlikely that a considerable market for sets of books is at hand.

10. HOW AND WHY DO PEOPLE SELECT THEIR BOOKS?

The reasons people give for reading certain books are not necessarily their real reasons. Often the reason they assign represents a rationalization to cover the true motive, which they either will not admit or of which they may be quite unconscious. Therefore, in addition to question 11, "What made you want to read this book?" several other questions were asked. Thus we obtained at least certain clues, though a comprehensive inquiry into this subject would require a complete survey in itself and even then could not adequately answer the question. Our queries were as follows:

- Q. 11. What made you want to read this book?
- Q. 30. Do you read the reviews of books or criticisms of books on the book page in your newspapers or magazines regularly, sometimes, or never?
- Q. 21. Have you a hobby or special interest which leads you to read books on a certain subject?
- Q. 21(a). (If yes) What is your hobby or interest?
- Q. 21(b). About how many books on this subject do you own?

REASONS FOR LAST BOOK READ. The first question, "What made you want to read this book?" was put to the 1,982 active readers with respect to the last book read, i.e., within a month. The wide variety of reasons given is indicated by the following listing, which has been classified into major groups:

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REASONS FOR LAST BOOK READ

<i>Recommendation</i>	#	%
Recommended by a friend	199	10
Recommended by a family member .	80	4
Recommended by church	8	*
Recommended by school	115	6
Heard about it (source not reported or vague)	213	11
Total	615	31

Advertising and Reviews

Saw reviews in paper (or magazine)	72	4
Was on the best-seller list	39	2
Advertisement was interesting; saw advertisement	22	1
Heard about it on the radio	7	*
Saw it in the store	8	*
Liked the looks of it	39	2
Title was interesting	32	2
Saw movie and wanted to read the book	48	2
Miscellaneous advertising	7	*
Total	274	14

Interest in Subject

Know the author; live near town it's about, etc.	31	2
Read for business, for profession . .	55	2
Interested in religion	36	2
Interested in war, history	64	3
Interested in foreign countries . . .	20	1
Interested in self-improvement . . .	31	2
Like the author	120	6
Miscellaneous subject interest (many particular subjects)	160	8
Total	517	26

* Less than .5%.

FINDINGS DERIVED FROM THE STUDY

REASONS FOR LAST BOOK READ—(Cont.)

<i>Convenience</i>	#	%
Felt like reading—this was available	80	4
Wanted to look up certain facts . .	19	1
Book was a gift	43	2
Was curious about the book . . .	28	1
Nothing else to do	89	4
Like the general type of book (mystery, etc.)	72	4
Relaxation	52	3
Miscellaneous convenience reasons .	22	1
Total	405	20
Book club sent it	59	3
Miscellaneous reasons	63	3
No reason given	49	3
Total %		100

Total people who read during past month 1,982

As usually happens in studies of people's behavior, the influence of advertising is admitted by only a small proportion of the respondents. Because of the extent to which people rationalize their actions, it would be very unwise to take the above reasons too literally. For example, "Heard about it" (source not reported), comprising 11 per cent of the reasons given, may in large measure relate to advertising. Moreover, many of the recommendations and the expressed interests may reflect advertising.

DO PEOPLE READ BOOK REVIEWS? Many people read book reviews, either regularly or occasionally. Like the reading of books, the reading of reviews increases with education. This is apparent in the following table:

PEOPLE AND BOOKS

READING OF REVIEWS BY EDUCATIONAL LEVELS

<i>Read Reviews</i>	<i>Grade School %</i>	<i>High School %</i>	<i>College %</i>	<i>Total %</i>
Regularly	5	18	35	19
Sometimes	22	44	48	39
Never	32	26	13	24
Don't know	1	1	*	1
Nonreaders	40	11	4	17
Total %	100	100	100	100
Total interviews . .	1,115	1,705	1,151	4,000†

* Less than .5%.

† The total includes twenty-nine people for whom educational level was not given.

The relation between the reading of book reviews and age level is not nearly so obvious. If we combine the two groups of readers of reviews, "regularly" and "sometimes," then the twenty- to twenty-nine-year-old age group, with 68 per cent, stands highest, with a decline in frequency as age increases. Excepting the youngest age group, this agrees with the analysis of reading of books by age groups, as shown in an earlier table.

READING OF REVIEWS BY AGE GROUPS

<i>Read Reviews</i>	<i>15-19 %</i>	<i>20-29 %</i>	<i>30-39 %</i>	<i>40-49 %</i>	<i>50-59 %</i>	<i>60 and Over %</i>
Regularly	14	21	24	20	18	18
Sometimes	46	47	39	38	34	29
Never	36	22	22	24	21	22
Don't know	1	1	1	1	1	1
Nonreaders	3	9	14	17	26	30
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total interviews . .	426	746	831	791	585	621

FINDINGS DERIVED FROM THE STUDY

When we analyze the reading of book reviews by active and inactive readers, we find the following close relationship:

READING OF REVIEWS BY ACTIVE AND INACTIVE BOOK READERS

<i>Read Reviews</i>	<i>Active Readers %</i>	<i>Inactive Readers %</i>
Regularly	30	16
Sometimes	47	51
Never	22	32
Don't know	1	1
Total %	100	100
Total interviews	1,982	846

In this relationship, we cannot say which is cause and which effect. We can say only that the reading of books and the reading of book reviews seem to go together to a large extent.

B. Competitors for Attention of Book Readers

I. TIME SPENT IN READING AND COMPETING ACTIVITIES

Among the many agencies which compete for people's time and attention, we included in our survey the radio, newspapers, magazines and movies. The questions regarding newspapers and magazines were introductory in nature and served this purpose very well; those relating to radio-listening habits and movie attendance were placed in the body of the questionnaire. The questions were phrased as follows:

Q. 1. Yesterday, did you read any newspaper or newspapers?

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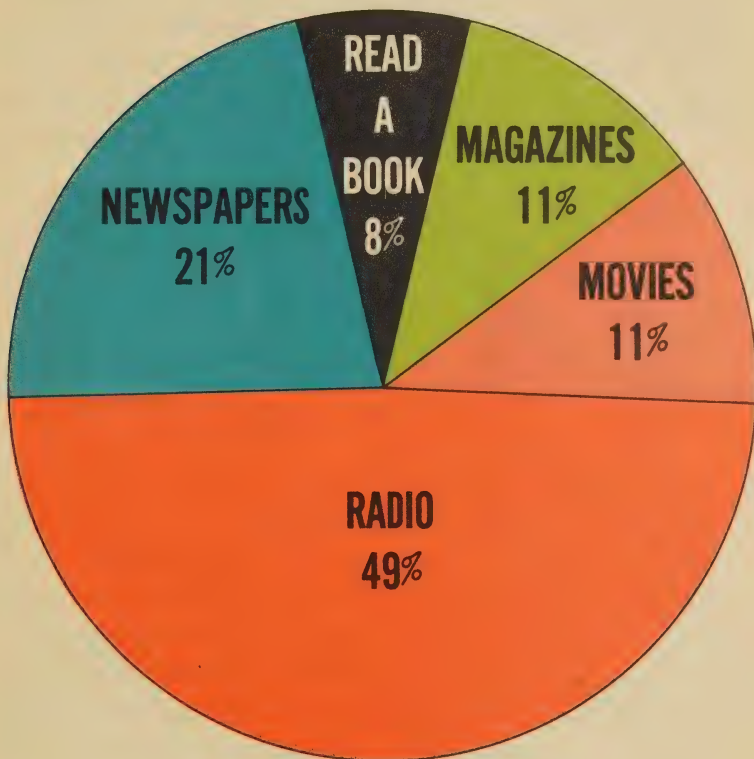
- Q. 1(a). About how much time did you spend reading it (them)?
- Q. 2. How about magazines, *yesterday* did you read any?
- Q. 2(a). About how much time did you spend reading it (them)?
- Q. 16. By the way, *yesterday* did you listen to your radio?
- Q. 16(a). About how much time altogether, throughout the day and evening, did you spend listening to the radio?
- Q. 22. By the way, *yesterday* did you go to a movie?
- Q. 22(a). About how much time did you spend in the movie?

Naturally, the times which people gave us in answer to these questions are not accurate to the minute, but represent approximations. Comparison of the findings of this study with the results of intensive studies of people's radio-listening and magazine- and newspaper-reading habits made recently * shows that the answers here given represent fairly accurate estimates of the amount of time they spend in these activities. The primary purpose here was to obtain some clues to the total amount of time spent by people on these several activities as compared with the time they spend in reading books.

Our questions relating to book reading followed immediately upon those regarding newspapers and magazines. Of all persons who said they had read a book yesterday, that is, 21

* Private studies made by The Psychological Corporation.

**TIME SPENT IN READING BOOKS
AS COMPARED WITH OTHER ACTIVITIES**



FINDINGS DERIVED FROM THE STUDY

per cent of the total of 4,000 interrogated, the question was asked:

Q. 3(a). About how much time did you spend reading it?

As mentioned earlier in the report, the interviewing in this study was spread proportionately over the various days of the week and the total period for interviewing covered almost three full weeks. Therefore, taking "yesterday" as a base, valid comparisons of time spent on the five activities may be drawn. The findings are shown in the following table:

TIME SPENT IN READING BOOKS AS COMPARED WITH
OTHER ACTIVITIES

Activities	% of 4,000	Average Time Spent	Total Hours
Read book yesterday . . .	21	13 min.	877
Read newspaper yesterday .	85	35 "	2,367
Listened to radio yesterday .	74	85 "	5,683
Read magazine yesterday .	40	19 "	1,280
Went to movies yesterday .	12	18 "	1,225

It will be seen that a total of 10,555 hours was spent "yesterday" by the 4,000 people in reading magazines and newspapers, listening to the radio and going to the movies. *This is twelve times as much as the 877 hours spent in reading books.* These estimates are an indication of how great is the competing influence of the radio, newspapers, magazines and movies. They are also an indication of the great potential field for books in absorbing some of this time.

The total hours spent at the radio and at the movies represent 60 per cent of the total hours spent on the five activities. Some of the time spent in the three reading activities, books, magazines and newspapers, is in part a duplication of the

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time spent listening to the radio by those people who had the radio turned on while reading. Therefore, reading activities actually occupy something more than 40 per cent of the total time for these five activities.

2. THE INFLUENCE OF AGE AND EDUCATION

People's listening and reading habits by education and age present some differences that may have interest and significance not only for the sponsors of this study but also for educators, sociologists, psychologists, and students generally. Herewith is the pertinent table by educational levels:

ACTIVITIES BY EDUCATIONAL LEVELS

<i>Books</i>	<i>Grade School</i>	<i>High School</i>	<i>College</i>	<i>Total</i>
Read a book yesterday . . .	9%	20%	34%	21%
No book read yesterday . . .	91	80	66	79
Total %	100	100	100	100
Total interviews . . .	1,115	1,705	1,151	4,000 *
Average time spent in minutes	4	12	23	13
<i>Newspapers</i>				
Read a newspaper yesterday .	73%	88%	93%	85%
Average time spent in minutes	32	36	38	35
<i>Magazines</i>				
Read a magazine yesterday . .	23%	40%	54%	40%
Average time spent in minutes	11	20	26	19
<i>Radio</i>				
Listened to radio yesterday . .	67%	77%	77%	74%
Average time spent in minutes	77	95	79	85
<i>Movies</i>				
Went to movies yesterday . .	10%	15%	11%	12%
Average time spent in minutes	16	22	16	18

* The total includes twenty-nine people for whom educational level was not given.

FINDINGS DERIVED FROM THE STUDY

READING ACTIVITIES BY EDUCATIONAL LEVELS. Having shown earlier in the report that education is probably the primary influence on the reading of books, it is interesting to carry the analysis of reading activities one step farther, based upon the preceding table. A summary of the average time spent by those with grade-school, high-school or college education in the three reading activities, as compared with the time spent by them on movies and radio, gives the following results:

AVERAGE TIME SPENT YESTERDAY ON FIVE ACTIVITIES
BY EDUCATIONAL LEVELS

	<i>Grade School</i> <i>1,115 People</i>	<i>High School</i> <i>1,705 People</i>	<i>College</i> <i>1,151 People</i>
Books . . .	4 minutes	12 minutes	23 minutes
Magazines . .	11 "	20 "	26 "
Newspapers .	32 "	36 "	38 "
Total . . .	47 "	68 "	87 "
Movies . . .	16 "	22 "	16 "
Radio . . .	77 "	95 "	79 "
Total . . .	93 "	117 "	95 "

It is evident from these figures that the total time spent in three reading activities by persons of college education is almost twice as great as the amount spent by those with only grade-school education and 28 per cent more than is spent by those with high-school education. The college group spent almost as much time on the three reading activities as it did at the movies and listening to the radio.

READING ACTIVITIES BY AGE GROUPS. The greater amount of time spent at the movies and listening to the radio, by the group with high-school education, is attributable to the larger proportion of young people, thirty years of age and under,

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included among them. This was shown in the analysis of the sampling previously presented. Examination of the following table shows how much more time these young people spent at these two activities:

	ACTIVITIES BY AGE GROUPS						
	15-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 and Over	Total
<i>Books</i>							
Read a book yesterday	34%	27%	19%	17%	16%	18%	21%
No book read yesterday	66	73	81	83	84	82	79
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total inter-views	425	746	831	791	586	621	4,000
Average time spent in minutes	22	19	12	10	8	12	13
<i>Newspapers</i>							
Read a newspaper yesterday	84%	85%	84%	87%	86%	83%	85%
Average time spent in minutes	22	31	33	39	43	44	35
<i>Magazines</i>							
Read a magazine yesterday	51%	44%	38%	36%	35%	35%	40%
Average time spent in minutes	20	22	18	19	17	20	19
<i>Radio</i>							
Listened to radio yesterday	77%	74%	71%	74%	77%	75%	74%
Average time spent in minutes	91	98	80	78	83	87	85
<i>Movies</i>							
Went to movies yesterday	27%	16%	11%	8%	9%	6%	12%
Average time spent in minutes	44	24	15	12	15	9	18

FINDINGS DERIVED FROM THE STUDY

ACTIVITIES OF PEOPLE WHO READ A BOOK YESTERDAY COMPARED WITH THOSE WHO DID NOT. People who read a book yesterday did not take this time at the expense of the other four activities. This is clearly apparent from inspection of the figures in the following table:

ACTIVITIES OF THOSE WHO DID AND THOSE WHO DID NOT
READ A BOOK YESTERDAY

<i>Yesterday's Activities</i>	<i>Read a Book Yesterday 845 People</i>		<i>Did Not Read a Book Yesterday 3,155 People</i>	
	<i>% Par- ticipating</i>	<i>Average Time Spent</i>	<i>% Par- ticipating</i>	<i>Average Time Spent</i>
Reading a book	100%	62 min.	0	None
Reading a magazine . . .	51%	24	36%	18 min.
Reading a newspaper . .	91%	38	84%	35
Listening to the radio . .	76%	82	74%	86
Attending a movie	12%	18	12%	18
Total time for five activities		224		157

The suggested comparison with the earlier table reveals that the percentage participation of those who read a book yesterday in the various other activities is greater than that of the people who did not read a book, namely 162 minutes as against 157 minutes for nonreaders. Average time spent in other reading is greater, while time spent in attendance at movies is equal, and time devoted to radio listening is only barely less. *Thus, we find that the reading of books is not necessarily a substitute for other activities, but a supplement to them.*

Reading a newspaper is the most common daily habit, with radio listening next, whereas magazines are read every other day or less.

3. THE INFLUENCE OF HOBBIES AND INTERESTS

It was surmised that there might be some connection between hobbies and book-reading habits. In order to determine whether such a relationship existed, the following questions were asked:

Q. 21. Have you a hobby or special interest which leads you to read books on a certain subject?

Q. 21(a). (If yes) What is your hobby or interest?

Q. 21(b). About how many books on this subject do you own?

These questions were not put to those who had not read a book for five years or more or to respondents who had never read a book. They were asked of the 3,322 people who constitute our active and inactive readers and of those nonreaders who had read a book within the last five years but not within the past year.

In answer to the first of this group of questions, 31 per cent said they had a hobby or special interest; 69 per cent said they had no hobby or special interest. Analyzing these results by active, inactive, and nonreaders, it was found that active readers tended to have more hobbies and special interests than inactive and nonreaders. The details were as follows:

FINDINGS DERIVED FROM THE STUDY

DEGREE OF READING AND PRESENCE OF HOBBIES

	<i>Active Readers</i>	<i>Inactive Readers</i>	<i>Non- Readers *</i>	<i>Total</i>
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
Has a hobby or interest	36	27	21	31
Has no hobby	64	73	79	69
Total %	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>
Total interviews	1,982	846	494	3,322

* See definition above. The question was not asked of those who had not read a book for five years or more or who had never read a book.

It was also found upon analysis, however, that there was a definite relationship between the extent of hobbies and education. The higher their education, the more likely are people to have a hobby or hobbies, as shown in the following table:

HOBBIES BY EDUCATIONAL LEVELS

	<i>Grade School</i>	<i>High School</i>	<i>College</i>
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
Has a hobby or interest	21	28	42
Has no hobby	79	72	58
Total %	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>
Total interviews	668	1,525	1,108

Therefore, each of the educational groups was divided into two classes, the active and the inactive readers, in order to establish more clearly whether a significant relationship exists between hobbies and the reading of books. This analysis produced the following table:

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RELATION BETWEEN HOBBIES, EDUCATION AND ACTIVE AND INACTIVE READING

	Grade School		High School		College	
	Active	Inactive	Active	Inactive	Active	Inactive
Has a hobby or interest	%	%	%	%	%	%
Has no hobby	23	20	32	22	44	36
	77	80	68	78	56	64
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total interviews	274	394	876	649	821	287

The figures in this table show rather clearly that there is an independent relationship between hobbies and the reading of books. It will be seen that, regardless of how much or little education a person has, those people with hobbies tend to read significantly more than those who have no hobbies.

It has been shown that among the active readers, that is the 1,982 people who have read a book within a month, 704, or 36 per cent, had hobbies. The answers to question 21 (a), designed to bring out the nature of these hobbies, revealed that they include a wide variety. A classification of the answers is presented below:

HOBBIES OF ACTIVE READERS	%
Art, music, poetry and other cultural interests	22
Science (photography, aviation, medicine, etc.)	19
Sports (fishing, hunting, golf, baseball, etc.)	11
Gardening and nature study	10
Religion	10
Sewing, cooking, home decorating, etc.	7
Government and politics	5
Stamps, antiques, and other collections	5
Own occupation as a hobby	4
Travel	3
Miscellaneous hobbies	4
Total %	100
Total active readers having hobbies	704

FINDINGS DERIVED FROM THE STUDY

The numbers of books on their hobbies said to be owned by these same people were as follows:

NUMBERS OF BOOKS ON HOBBY OWNED		%
1 to 3 books		13
4 to 6 books		21
7 to 9 books		4
10 to 19 books		15
20 to 49 books		11
50 to 99 books		4
Over 100 books		7
Don't know how many books		25
Total %		100
Total active readers having hobbies		704

C. *What Book Readers Think About Their Recent and Future Book-Reading and Buying Habits*

1. COMPARISON OF RECENT AND ESTIMATED FUTURE BOOK READING

The war has been regarded by many as one of the chief factors in the great increase in book sales in recent years. The large increase in earnings, especially in the middle- and lower-income groups, due to longer hours, higher hourly wages and rapidly increasing wage rates, enabled many more people to buy books. Moreover, the great shortage of household products and many kinds of living necessities made for the increased buying of books in every income group. These and other influences attributable to the war no doubt played an important part in the ready sale of books.

Consequently, it is natural that the return to a peace-time economy should raise the apprehension of a reversal of this

trend. Unemployment, reduced buying power and the availability of necessary household articles and wearing apparel might tend to curtail the purchase of the books. The critical question, therefore, is this: Was the buying of books in recent years a war-time luxury which will abate now that the war has ended?

It is quite conceivable that the purchase of books may decrease in the immediate future, even while the reading of books shows a steady increase during this same period. The present survey points strongly to the continued growth of the book-reading habit and of the proportion of people who read books. It does not point to a decrease in the purchase of books in the near future, even though this is possible. On the other hand, it points strongly to a long-term increase in the purchase of books.

We have already seen that the book-reading habit is closely associated with years of education, more so than with income or economic status. Therefore, as the average level of education throughout the country rises, it follows that the number of active readers and the frequency with which books are read will also rise. Over a long-term period this is bound to bring an increase in the sale of books. However, it was believed that some further light would be thrown on the immediate future if we asked people about the frequency of their reading of books in the present and the recent past, and about their plans for future reading. The questions asked were as follows:

- Q. 17. As compared with the number of books you were reading two years ago, are you reading more, fewer, or about the same number?

FINDINGS DERIVED FROM THE STUDY

Q. 17(a). (If more or fewer) Why would you say you are reading more (fewer) books now than you were two years ago?

Q. 18. Do you think that in the next year or two you will read more, fewer, or about the same number of books as you have been reading?

Q. 18(a). Why do you think you will read more (fewer) books than you have been reading?

PRESENT AND PAST READING HABITS. With regard to their present and past reading habits, active and inactive readers answered as follows:

READING HABITS TODAY AS COMPARED WITH TWO YEARS AGO

	<i>Active Readers</i>		<i>Inactive Readers</i>	
	#	%	#	%
Reading more books today . .	580	29	83	10
Reading fewer books today . .	578	29	399	47
Reading about the same . . .	790	40	333	39
Don't know	34	2	31	4
Total %		100		100
Total interviews	1,982		846	

It is a curious fact that among active readers almost exactly as many said they were reading more as said they were reading less (580 and 578). While in the active group these two answers offset each other, among inactive readers there is a much greater variance, the extent of decreased reading being four to five times that of increased reading.

The reasons given by the 580 active readers who said that they were reading more books today than two years ago were as follows:

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REASONS GIVEN FOR READING MORE

	#	%
Have more time now	248	43
Increased opportunity	78	13
Greater interest	129	22
Greater interest in one specific subject	34	6
Likes to read more now	92	16
Has to stay home more	21	4
Improve mind	12	2
Miscellaneous	18	3
No answer	12	2
Total %		<u>111</u>
Total answers	<u>644</u>	
Total active readers who say they are reading more	580	

In this table and the following, people sometimes gave more than one reason, hence the percentages, which are based on the number of people, add up to more than 100. The reasons for reading less now than in the past given by the 578 active readers who made that reply were as follows:

REASONS GIVEN FOR READING LESS

	#	%
Less time because of longer hours, more work	404	70
Less time because of hobbies, organizations, social life	65	11
Used to read more when in school	17	3
Eyes are bad	50	9
No more interest	35	6
Reading more magazines, newspapers	15	3
Can't get books	7	1
Miscellaneous	11	2
No answer	9	1
Total %		<u>106</u>
Total answers	<u>613</u>	
Total active readers who say they are reading less	578	

FINDINGS DERIVED FROM THE STUDY

In both of these tables, but more strikingly in the latter, the factor of time is preponderant, 81 per cent of those who are now reading less than they did two years ago ascribing the decrease to lack of time.

ESTIMATED BOOK READING IN NEXT YEAR OR TWO. In answer to question 18, definitely more people said that they expect to read more books in the next year or two than said that they will read fewer books, especially in the active reader group. The details are as follows:

ESTIMATED FREQUENCY OF BOOK READING IN NEXT YEAR OR TWO

	<i>Active</i>		<i>Inactive</i>	
	#	%	#	%
Will read more books . . .	672	34	238	28
Will read fewer books . . .	139	7	73	9
Will read about the same . .	957	48	392	46
Don't know	214	11	143	17
Total %		100		100
Total interviews . . .	1,982		846	

Inquiry into the reasons underlying the expectation of increased reading in the future reveals that they are very similar to those given to explain increase in present reading over past. Again the factor of time is predominant, being cited by 48 per cent of the persons who plan to read more in the future. A summary of all reasons given is set forth in the table on the following page.

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REASONS FOR MORE FUTURE READING		#	%
More time		324	48
Increased opportunity		43	7
Greater interest		109	16
Likes (or wants) to read more		142	21
Wants to improve mind—self-improvement through reading		45	7
Greater interest in one specific subject		27	4
Will have to stay home more		9	1
Miscellaneous		9	1
No answer		20	3
Total %			108
Total answers		728	
Total active readers who say they are reading more		672	

The reasons named by those who expect to read less in the future parallel closely those given by people who have been reading less than in the past. High rank among them is taken by poor eyesight, a circumstance which may well indicate the need for giving increased attention to this prevalent condition in connection with the design of books.

REASONS FOR LESS FUTURE READING		#	%
Less time because of longer hours, more work		88	63
Eyes are bad		19	14
Less time because of hobbies, organizations, social life		13	9
Won't be in school any more		1	1
No more interest		6	4
Reading more magazines, newspapers		1	1
Can't get books		5	4
Miscellaneous		3	2
No answer		4	3
Total %			101
Total answers		140	
Total active readers who say they are reading fewer books		139	

FINDINGS DERIVED FROM THE STUDY

The stress laid on the time element, particularly with respect to lack of leisure for reading on account of long working hours, would seem to constitute a favorable indication for an increase in the reading of books now that the pressure of war-time conditions and abnormally long work days has been relieved. Such an increase would be independent of and additional to the long-term increase due to steadily growing education.

2. COMPARISON OF RECENT AND ESTIMATED FUTURE BOOK BUYING

ARE ADDITIONS BEING PLANNED? It is one thing to expect more or less sincerely that one will read more in the future than in the past. It is another, and much more concrete form of future planning, to have in mind specifically the aim to expand one's library and, beyond that even, to know what books or kinds of books one anticipates purchasing. Therefore it was decided to include in the questionnaire queries which would bring out such plans for future book buying.

The first of these, asked of the entire sample of 4,000, was phrased as follows:

Q. 26. Are you planning to add new books to your library within the next year?

In answer to this question, 41 per cent answered "yes," 43 per cent answered "no," and 16 per cent said they were uncertain. The most interesting fact about this, however, is that a considerably larger proportion of people in the upper-income group, those who already had the most books, were planning to add to their libraries. The details were as follows:

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ARE PEOPLE PLANNING TO ENLARGE THEIR LIBRARIES?

<i>Answers</i>	<i>Upper</i> %	<i>Middle</i> %	<i>Lower</i> %	<i>Total</i> %
Yes	55	41	28	41
No	32	42	53	43
Don't know	13	17	19	16
Total %	100	100	100	100
Total people . . .	1,194	1,611	1,195	4,000

KINDS OF BOOKS PEOPLE ARE PLANNING TO ADD. To all those who said they were planning to expand their libraries, the further question was put:

Q. 26(a). What kind of books are you planning to add?

The answers given are shown in the following table, by income groups as well as by total:

KINDS OF BOOKS PEOPLE ARE PLANNING TO ADD

	<i>Upper</i> %	<i>Middle</i> %	<i>Lower</i> %	<i>Total</i> %
Miscellaneous fiction . . .	17	17	18	17
History; current events . . .	13	11	10	11
Best sellers	12	10	6	10
Miscellaneous nonfiction . .	9	9	11	9
Religion	7	8	8	7
Adventure	4	7	11	7
Biography	9	6	6	7
War	5	6	6	6
Science	6	7	6	6
Children's books	6	6	6	6
Mystery	4	4	10	5
Arts and decoration	6	3	3	4

FINDINGS DERIVED FROM THE STUDY

KINDS OF BOOKS PEOPLE ARE PLANNING TO ADD—(Cont.)

	<i>Upper Middle Lower Total</i>			
	%	%	%	%
Poetry	2	3	3	3
Psychology	3	2	3	3
Economics; business	4	3	2	3
Humor	3	3	4	3
Self-help	3	3	2	3
Textbooks	3	3	2	3
Encyclopedias	2	3	2	2
Romance	1	1	2	1
Assortment	9	9	7	9
Don't know what kind	19	20	17	19
Total %	<u>147</u>	<u>144</u>	<u>145</u>	<u>144</u>
Total answers given	<u>954</u>	<u>954</u>	<u>489</u>	<u>2,397</u>
Total people answering	<u>651</u>	<u>665</u>	<u>336</u>	<u>1,652</u>

Miscellaneous fiction and best sellers are mentioned by more than one-quarter of the group, while history, current events and miscellaneous nonfiction are named by one-fifth.

Children's books, it should be noted, are mentioned by 6 per cent of each income group, thus indicating a uniform consciousness of this need.

Also significant is the fact that most people named more than one kind of book; the average is one and a half, and this, also, is true of every income group. It accounts, too, for the fact that the "total" percentages shown in the table are all in excess of 100, viz., 147, 144, 145 and 144.

IV. OPINIONS OF PUBLISHERS, DEALERS, DISTRIBUTORS AND EDUCATORS

A. *Publishers' Expressions of Opinion*

QUESTIONS INVOLVED in the future of book reading and book buying are of vital concern not only to book manufacturers, but to all others engaged in businesses that are affected by the practices and habits of the reading public. Important among these are the publishers, dealers and distributors of books, whose functions play such fundamental roles in supplying reading matter to the consumer.

Because it is the publishers who, more than the other two groups, must keep their fingers on the public pulse to guide them in the conduct of their business, it is appropriate to inquire first into their views concerning future trends. A number of them have ventured to express such opinions publicly, as reported in *Publishers' Weekly* for September 1, 1945.

Simon & Schuster, for example, "foresees the building of ten million new homes and the reconstruction of millions of others, and millions of these homes will provide living room for a billion books . . . foresees new printing and binding machinery which will make it possible to make better books more cheaply . . . foresees prices coming down; retailing becoming more prosperous; present stores growing; bigger and new ones being opened, and, in addition, book clubs prospering."

Douglas Black, vice-president of Doubleday, Doran, thinks that the expansion so greatly accelerated during the war was taking place to a marked degree before the war and that now "the book industry is presented with a challenging opportunity for further extending and amplifying its means of distribution to meet the needs of the rapidly growing reading public."

The president of Harper & Brothers, Frank MacGregor, thinks "it stands to reason that much (of the increased reading of books in the past few years) will carry over into the more normal years ahead . . . In fact it would seem that the product of our industry has a future that knows no bounds."

Publishers of reprint editions and other inexpensive books are also optimistic. John O'Connor, president of Grosset & Dunlap, says, "There will undoubtedly be industry-wide pressure on manufacturing facilities. Temporary labor and machine shortage may turn out to be a providential restraining factor upon the fantastic over-production which might easily result if all the post-war projects came to a head at the same time."

B. D. Zevin, president of the World Publishing Company, says, "Our personnel requirements will increase by 25 per cent within the next year and our production requirements will grow by at least 50 per cent."

A warning note is sounded by Norman Donaldson, managing director of the Yale University Press, who says, "In my opinion, the post-war and long-term market for books in this country and abroad will be much larger than it has ever been before . . . But in spite of the increased market and the freedom from restrictions, I have a strong conviction that pub-

lishers and booksellers will not continue to ride along on the rising sales curve that has lifted them into the balmy upper air during the past few years. Uncle Sam, for example, is one nice old customer who has bought his last book—for the time being, at least. So while I think publishers, and especially university presses, now have what is undoubtedly the greatest opportunity in their history . . . I do feel that it is going to be a tough assignment."

An even graver note of warning is sounded by Melville Minton, president of G. P. Putnam's Sons. Says he: "I expect a sharp downward trend in the first half, at least, of 1946 . . . I believe we are just about through with the days of filling orders and are now at the point where we must go out and again sell books . . . The greatest problem facing book publishing today is the establishment of more sound outlets where books may be bought."

Lovell Thompson, manager of the trade department at Houghton Mifflin, "foresees a slump in reading; stiff competition within the industry; and not much opportunity to employ many more people in the publishing business in the immediate future." This opinion is shared more or less by William B. Ziff, president of Ziff-Davis, and by others who agree that the book business "will not be the unlimited bonanza many now consider it to be."

Thus, as might be expected, there is seen to be a diversity of opinion among publishers as to whether in the immediate future the market for books will increase, decrease or remain constant. No doubt the causes of this lie largely within the experience of the individual publishing company, and partly, too, in the mental attitude of the executives themselves.

While the opinions expressed by those quoted and by other members of the industry are no doubt of great interest, it is apparent that they are in some respects contradictory and that they cannot, in any case, be regarded as applicable to the industry as a whole.

B. Opinions of Dealers and Distributors

The operator of a retail book establishment and the manager of a book department in a store are in a position to make day by day observations of the purchase or rental of books by that segment of the population represented by their clientele. Each retail dealer is, therefore, strategically placed to notice the behavior and to elicit the opinions of a limited public. However, such observations as they make are bound to be on a haphazard, rather than a systematic, basis, and to be influenced by the particular character of their following. Moreover, the impressions created by the most popular books are found to affect the dealer's opinion.

Nevertheless, the opinions of dealers, no matter how unscientific, are important, especially because of their opportunity to influence customers.

Accordingly, in every city in which consumer interviews were conducted, the owner or manager of one or more book stores or departments was interviewed. The number of such interviews was roughly equated to the size of the city, and the calls were distributed among stores selling only books, those selling books and other merchandise, and book departments of department stores.

Of a total of 225 such interviews, sixty-one, or 27 per cent,

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were in independent book stores selling only books, and thirty-five, or 16 per cent, were in the book departments of department stores. These ninety-six interviews, accounting for 43 per cent of all dealer contacts, were with persons whose only interest was the sale of books. In the remaining stores, some other merchandise also was sold.

When asked to state the number of books they had for sale, half of the dealers reported 10,000 books or less; quantities reported by the other half ranged from 10,000 to between 150,000 and 200,000. It is interesting to note that the number of books available for sale was about the same in stores selling only books as in those which sold other merchandise as well.

If we refer to the table on page 68, reporting the titles of the last books read by the 1,982 active readers of books, we see how great a diversity there is. Approximately 800 titles were given. (A few titles reported inaccurately may or may not represent duplication.) These active readers average three books read per month, and the total number of titles read by them during a month must be well over a thousand. To satisfy any appreciable proportion of this demand would require that a book store have a very wide range of titles available for purchase or rental.

Exactly 55 per cent of the 225 stores had a rental department. The numbers of books in such departments varied from a little under 100 to several thousand.

Twenty of the stores, 9 per cent, employed only one person. The median number of clerks employed was four, and 12 per cent of the stores employed more than ten people.

This brief summary of some of the characteristics of these

book stores and departments indicates that the 225 interviews represent a very wide range of small, medium-sized and large book dealers. The questionnaire used in interrogating these dealers follows.

DEALER QUESTIONNAIRE

Introduction: We are making a survey for some of the book publishers and manufacturers who are interested in future demands of the reading public, and who need your opinions before making their plans.

1. There is general consensus that more people are reading books now than ever before. Do you believe this increased reading is due to the war and so will decline with ending of the war____; or do you believe it is due to a growing interest in books____? D.K._____

(a). Why do you believe that? _____

2. In your own sales has this increased interest in books in the last two years been in novels and fiction____; or in non-fiction____? Same as before____ D.K._____

(a). Based on your sales what percentage would you say is fiction and what percentage is nonfiction? ____% for fiction; ____% for nonfiction. D.K._____

3. In the field of fiction what particular type of book has shown the greatest activity or increase in sales during the past year?
-

4. And in nonfiction, what type of book has shown the greatest activity in the past year? _____
-

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5. On the basis of your experience what types of fiction do you think will be most popular in the next year or so? _____

(a). And what types of nonfiction? _____

6. What is your own attitude about the publishing of less expensive books and reprints, such as the 25¢ paper-bound books, 49¢ to 89¢ thin cloth-bound books, and reprints at \$1.00 to \$1.50? _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

(a). Do these less expensive books increase_____, or decrease_____, or make no difference_____, in the dollar volume of your sales? D.K._____

(b). Is that true only of fiction_____; nonfiction_____; or of both____? D.K._____

(c). What are your reasons for saying so? _____

7. After the war when paper is again available do you think the trend toward these less expensive editions will continue_____, or not____? D.K._____

(a). Why (or why not?) _____

8. What do you think are the most effective methods of increasing sales in the fiction field? In nonfiction? (Ask first about fiction, and check; then nonfiction and check.)

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	<i>Fiction</i>	<i>Nonfiction</i>
Publishers' advertising in newspapers	_____	_____
Store advertising in newspapers	_____	_____
Reviews in newspapers	_____	_____
Reviews in magazines	_____	_____
Store displays	_____	_____
Catalogues	_____	_____
Personal notices to clientele	_____	_____
Or just what? _____		
D.K.	_____	_____

9. What single method of promotion have you used most effectively, would you say? _____

10. Would you mind telling me the average price people pay for a book in your store? _____

D.K. _____

11. Do you have a rental library? Yes _____ No _____

(a). (If yes) Do you plan to push rentals more _____ than in the past, or less _____; or about the same _____? D.K. _____

(b). (If no) Do you plan to add a rental library service? Yes _____ No _____ Undecided _____

12. About what percentage of your sales in the past year have been for books sent to men and women in the armed services? _____% D.K. _____

(a). Was most of this fiction _____, or nonfiction _____, or was it about equally divided _____? D.K. _____

13. Are there any kinds of books which you think are priced too high or too low? _____

Too high: _____

Too low: _____

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14. Do you believe that book clubs such as Literary Guild, Book-of-the-Month Club, Readers' Club, etc., have increased _____; or decreased _____ your sales; or have these clubs had no effect upon your sales _____? D.K. _____

Comment: _____

Details of Store

Ask about:

- (a). Approximate number of volumes for sale _____
- (b). Approximate number of volumes for rent _____
Are greeting cards _____, stationery _____, gifts _____ sold?
Other items for sale _____
General appearance of store: Very good _____; good _____; fair _____; poor _____.
Socioeconomic level of community: (Check one or more)
A _____ B _____ C _____ D _____
Number of clerks employed _____

Name of Store _____

Street and Number _____ City _____

Person Interviewed _____ Position _____

Date _____ A.M. _____ P.M. _____ Interviewer _____

I. DEALERS' OPINIONS OF FUTURE SALES TRENDS

The first question put to the dealers was as follows:

- Q. 1. There is general consensus that more people are reading books now than ever before. Do you

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believe this increased reading is due to the war and so will decline with ending of the war; or do you believe it is due to a growing interest in books?

In reply, 44 per cent said increased reading was due to the war; 34 per cent said it was due to a growing interest in books; 15 per cent said it was due to both factors, and 7 per cent held no opinion.

Our study with the readers themselves showed little evidence to support the dealers' great emphasis on the effects of the war. Only in the cases of 16 per cent of the active readers had the last book read been a war book, and the underlying evidence pointed to increased education rather than the war as a major influence.

The most frequent explanations by dealers who believe that the recent trends were due to a growing interest in books are cited below:

DEALERS' EXPLANATIONS OF GROWING INTEREST IN BOOKS

<i>Reasons Given</i>	<i>#</i>
Many more people read	18
People are buying good books and will continue to .	13
Trend started before the war	12
War curtailed activities, but reading will continue .	8
Better education means more reading	3

Only three dealers mentioned better education as the principal factor.

Among those dealers who felt that the reading of books would decline after the end of the war, a principal reason given was that reduced travel during the war increased read-

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ing. Increased earnings was also advanced by many as a cause of increased reading during the war.

When dealers were asked whether the increased sales in the last two years had been in fiction or nonfiction, 39 per cent said nonfiction; 22 per cent, fiction. The remaining 39 per cent said there was no relative change or were not aware of the nature of any trend.

To elicit dealers' opinions on the types of books that would have the greatest sale in the immediate future, the following two questions were asked:

Q. 5. On the basis of your experience what types of fiction do you think will be most popular in the next year or so?

Q. 5(a). And what types of nonfiction?

The responses of the 225 dealers are summarized in the two tables below:

MOST POPULAR FICTION IN NEXT YEAR

<i>Types of Books</i>	<i>Total</i>	
	#	%
Historical and biographical novels . . .	56	25
Escape literature	32	14
Lively, sex, and risqué stories	31	14
Romance	23	10
Religious and serious fiction	18	8
Mysteries	12	5
Stories of family life	12	5
Humor	8	4
"Light" fiction	9	4
"Good" fiction	8	4
Social, racial and psychological problems	7	3
War stories	5	2
Miscellaneous types	18	8

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MOST POPULAR FICTION IN NEXT YEAR—(Cont.)

<i>Specific Books Named</i>	<i>Total</i>	
	#	%
<i>Forever Amber</i>	7	3
<i>The Robe</i>	2	1
<i>Strange Fruit</i>	2	1
<i>The Green Years</i>	1	1
No opinion	39	17
Total %		129
Total answers	290	
Total interviews	225	

MOST POPULAR NONFICTION IN NEXT YEAR

<i>Types of Books</i>	<i>Total</i>	
	#	%
Biography and autobiography . . .	66	29
War books	32	14
World affairs, post-war plans and recon- version	31	14
Travel	24	11
Current events	20	9
History	13	6
Technical books	12	6
Religious books	8	4
Economic problems	9	4
Humor	8	4
Social problems	7	3
Away from war	7	3
Politics	5	2
Customs, problems of other countries .	4	2
Miscellaneous	30	13
No opinion	33	13
Total %		137
Total answers	309	
Total interviews	225	

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While the problem of classification of book types presents certain difficulties in attempting to interpret such tabulations as these, it is at least worth noting that 25 per cent of the total responses in the fiction group mentioned historical and biographical novels as likely to be most popular in the next year or so, while in the nonfiction group 29 per cent of the responses listed biography and autobiography.

2. INFLUENCE OF LOWER-PRICED EDITIONS

The following two questions were used to obtain the dealers' opinions of the influence of reprint editions:

- Q. 6. What is your own attitude about the publishing of less expensive books and reprints, such as the 25¢ paper-bound books, 49¢ to 89¢ thin cloth-bound books, and reprints at \$1.00 to \$1.50?
- Q. 6(a). Do these less expensive books increase, or decrease, or make no difference, in the dollar volume of your sales?

The first of these questions was asked primarily to introduce the subject, and the nature of dealers' responses followed the same pattern as shown in the specific responses to the second question, which follow:

EFFECT OF LESS EXPENSIVE EDITIONS ON SALES

<i>Influence on Sales</i>	#	%
Reprint editions are increasing sales	102	45
Makes no difference	75	33
Are decreasing sales	29	13
No opinions	19	9
Total	225	100

The dealers were also asked whether this increase or decrease would affect fiction, or nonfiction, or both. Here the dominant opinion was that it would affect both. In view of publicly announced plans for the increased publication of reprint editions, the opinion of book dealers is definitely encouraging.

The most frequent comment made by dealers was that books should be cheaper or should reach more people. The consumer study has shown that in the poorer levels of the population, where book reading and education are at their lowest levels, lower-priced reprint editions have an appreciable sale. More lower-priced reprint editions may, therefore, prove to be a very helpful measure for the book publishing industry.

3. BOOK-PROMOTION METHODS

A retail dealer is frequently in an excellent position to observe the effects of advertising. This is particularly true of books, because they have unique characteristics. The extent to which customers inquire for books they have heard about through reviews, advertisements, or publicity given to the opinions of reviewers or commentators, affords the dealer a definite basis for opinion. To sound out dealers on this subject, the following question was asked:

Q. 8. What do you think are the most effective methods of increasing sales in the fiction field?
In nonfiction?

The answers were practically identical for fiction and nonfiction. The following table combines the responses:

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DEALERS' OPINIONS OF MOST EFFECTIVE METHODS OF INCREASING BOOK SALES

<i>Methods</i>	<i>%</i>
Reviews in newspapers	61
Publishers' advertising in newspapers	60
Reviews in magazines	44
Store displays	42
Personal notices to clientele	30
Store advertising in newspaper	28
Catalogue	12
Radio book reviews	10
Word of mouth	4
Circulars	3
Mention by commentators	3
Combination of all	2
Window display	2
Reasonable prices	1
Movies of books	1
Condensation in magazines	1
Salesman	1
Miscellaneous	4
No opinion	4
Total %	<u>313*</u>
Total interviews	225

* This table combines more than three responses per dealer, resulting in a total percentage somewhat exceeding 300. It is best evaluated by reference to the percentage of dealers giving each response.

A further question was designed to limit promotion methods to the dealer's own individual efforts and to obtain his opinion on the most effective methods he has used:

Q. 9. What single method of promotion have you used most effectively, would you say?

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The answers are summarized in the table below:

DEALERS' MOST SUCCESSFUL PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES

<i>Activities</i>	<i>%</i>
Store and window display	38
Newspaper advertising by store	27
Personal notices	12
Direct mail	9
Catalogue and circulars	8
Personal contact	7
Salesmanship	4
Radio advertising	2
Newspaper ads by publishers	2
Combination of all	2
Value of book—subject matter	1
Reviews in newspaper	1
Location of store	1
Miscellaneous	3
No advertising	6
No opinion	1
Total %	<u>124*</u>
Total interviews	225

* Twenty-four per cent of the dealers named more than one activity.

The important point in both of these questions is that dealers are not only keenly aware of the importance of publishers' advertising efforts, and of book reviews, but also recognize fully the value of their own efforts in influencing the sale of books. The extent to which promotional methods are used and the choice of method employed vary, of course, with the initiative and personality of the individual dealer. It is of more than passing interest to note that only 1 per cent of the dealers voluntarily mentioned condensations in magazines as a means of promoting the sale of books.

4. BOOKS FOR MEN IN THE ARMED SERVICES

In recognition of the fact that much reading matter was sent to men in the armed services during the war and that campaigns to foster this practice were carried on, all 4,000 people entering into the consumer study were interrogated on this subject. The questions put to consumers were as follows:

Q. 31. Have you bought any *new* books in the past month to send away to men in the service?

Q. 31(a). (If yes) How many cloth covered; paper covered?

Eight per cent of the 4,000 consumers reported buying books for men in the services, and they also reported an average of slightly more than four books bought within the past month.

In order to approach this same subject from the viewpoint of the dealer, the following question was put to dealers:

Q. 12. About what percentage of your sales in the past year have been for books sent to men and women in the armed services?

Thirty-five per cent of the dealers did not know what proportion of the books purchased at their stores was destined for men in the armed services. The remaining 65 per cent gave estimates ranging from 1 to 75 per cent, with a median figure of about 16 per cent.

Both of these sets of data, consumer and dealer, imply that a considerable proportion of books was sent to men in the armed services. The figures cannot, however, be considered independently of other findings of the study, because we do not know the extent to which books purchased by consumers

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to send to men in the services may also have been reported as read by the purchaser, so that the same copy served both a civilian and a military book reader.

5. RENTAL LIBRARIES

Dealers' plans with regard to book rentals were covered in the following questions:

Q. 11(a). Do you plan to push rentals more than in the past, or less; or about the same?

Q. 11(b). Do you plan to add a rental library service?

The responses of the 225 dealers are summarized in the table below:

DEALERS' PLANS FOR RENTAL LIBRARIES

<i>Have a Rental Library</i>	#	%
Plan to push more rentals	42	19
Same effort on rentals	68	30
Less effort on rentals	8	4
Undecided	5	2
Total stores with rental libraries . .	123	55
<i>No Rental Library</i>		
Plan to add one	3	1
Undecided about rentals	12	5
Will not have rentals	87	39
Total stores without rental libraries .	102	45
Total stores	225	100

It is evident that very few book dealers who do not have a rental library are making plans to add one. Book stores are not, however, the only places where books may be rented. In

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the consumer study it was shown that in the eastern states private rental libraries are an appreciable factor as a source of books. This may well be due to the development of small rental libraries in stores handling newspapers, periodicals, and miscellaneous merchandise, as well as in drug stores. It seems justifiable to conclude that the rental of books will probably increase more rapidly from developments of this kind than from the operation of rental libraries in book stores alone.

6. PRICES OF BOOKS

Two questions asked of book dealers to ascertain their impressions concerning the prices paid for books were as follows:

- Q. 10. Would you mind telling me the average price people pay for a book in your store?
- Q. 13. Are there any kinds of books which you think are priced too high or too low?

The dealers' statements of the average price paid for books in their stores are as follows:

DEALERS' REPORT OF PRICES PAID FOR BOOKS

Price	#	%
Under \$1.00	23	10
\$1.00-\$1.49	29	13
1.50- 1.99	61	27
2.00- 2.49	52	23
2.50- 2.99	39	18
3.00 or more	3	1
No opinion	18	8
Total interviews . .	225	100

Except with respect to books priced at \$3.00 or more, this range of prices of books bought is fairly comparable to the consumer report. The discrepancy with respect to the higher-priced books is the more difficult to explain because book stores would seem to be the normal channels for the purchase of expensive books. It may be that consumers were inclined to overstate somewhat the prices paid for books.

In answer to the second question, 45 per cent of the dealers said that no books were priced too high. Thirty-three per cent named fiction as priced too high, 5 per cent cited children's books, and another 5 per cent said all books. Other types were named with such low frequency as to be unimportant. Much greater unanimity prevailed among dealers in the expression of opinion as to whether any type of book was priced too low. Ninety-one per cent reported that there was no type of book priced too low; 4 per cent named the Pocket Book Editions, but this was the only type mentioned with any appreciable degree of frequency in answer to this question.

7. DEALERS' OPINIONS OF BOOK CLUBS

It will be recalled that in the consumer survey, 27 per cent of the full sample reported either having a current membership in a book club in the family, or having had such a membership in the past. To determine what influence the development of book clubs is having on the sale of books through dealers, the following question was asked:

Q. 14. Do you believe that book clubs such as Literary Guild, Book-of-the-Month Club, Readers'

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Club, etc., have increased or decreased your sales, or have these clubs had no effect upon your sales?

Dealers' replies are summarized below:

INFLUENCE OF BOOK CLUBS ON SALES THROUGH DEALERS

<i>Influence on Sales</i>	#	%
Increased	95	42
Decreased	56	25
No effect	51	23
No opinion	23	10
Total	225	100

From the foregoing, it is evident that dealers are not necessarily alarmed at the number of books sold by clubs. Indeed, their opinions lean toward a favorable effect on their own sales. Doubtless much depends on the individual dealer as to whether the patronage of book clubs is turned to his advantage or to his detriment.

C. *Textbooks and the Opinions of Educators*

In outlining the scope of this study, the textbook field was described as limited to a brief examination of the post-war potentialities of the use of textbooks in colleges. However, it may be opportune to make passing reference first to the numbers of children attending schools of all grades. Any textbook printer or publisher not familiar with these figures, as shown by the decennial census, should be impressed by the fact that fewer children were attending grade schools in 1940 than in 1930. (See first table on page 64.) It will be worth while to

draw a comparison between school attendance at grade school, high school and college, and the census figures for the number of children and young people of the most common ages:

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND POPULATION *

<i>School</i>	<i>Number Attending</i>	<i>Total Children</i>	
		<i>Age Group</i>	<i>Number</i>
Grade school . . .	21,045,000	6-14	20,294,000
High school . . .	7,113,000	15-18	9,867,000
College . . .	1,493,000	19-22	9,410,000

* From 1940 census.

These figures to the nearest thousand necessarily afford only rough comparisons, because the age range of children in grade school is five to fifteen or sixteen, and the high-school range is normally thirteen to nineteen or twenty. However, according to the 1930 census there were in that year 24,600,000 children aged six to fourteen, and 23,588,000 children were reported as attending grade school. These figures indicate that the market for grade-school textbooks will vary with the interrelation of three factors: birth-rate changes, curriculum changes affecting the number of books required, and general economic conditions as they affect school budgets.

The high-school textbook field has undoubtedly done well between 1930 and 1940, since high-school attendance increased from 4,800,000 to 7,113,000. It would appear from consideration of the figures that the number attending high school might increase from the level shown in 1940. However, the lowest 20 per cent of children in mental abilities are very unlikely to reach or complete a high-school education. Therefore, such gains as may occur in high-school at-

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tendance will probably be small, unless changes in the curriculum should provide for students of inferior mental ability. Variations in birth rate will be an important factor in determining future high-school attendance.

College attendance has not reached the peak of potential enrollment, because at least one-third of high-school graduates are qualified for admission to college and mentally capable of completing college education. The controlling factor here is their ability to finance themselves.

In normal times, as in 1940, there were 1,493,203 students enrolled full time in institutions of higher learning. There were also 456,679 students taking summer school courses, and 292,236 taking extension and correspondence courses.* Even these students add to the textbook requirements. By 1944 the number of students enrolled full time in institutions of higher learning had dropped to 1,149,444. The 1944 figure does not indicate fully the radical change that took place in most colleges throughout the country, because it includes those men being trained under Army and Navy programs. In December, 1943, about 360,000 Army and Navy men were being trained in 480 institutions.† Another important fact is that enrollment of women has reached an all time high. Thus, the total figures tend to minimize the effect of the war upon those schools that are either co-educational or have men students only.

Current experience and estimates for the years immediately ahead show a marked increase in the male college popula-

* Source: *The World Almanac and Book of Facts for 1945*.

† Raymond Walters, President of the University of Cincinnati, *Statistics of Attendance in American Universities and Colleges, 1944*.

tion. This, of course, will be due to returned veterans who wish either to complete an education interrupted by the war or to take advantage of the opportunity to obtain a higher education. Assistant Administrator O. W. Clark of the Veterans Administration in Washington, D.C. has, on the basis of surveys, estimated that about 650,000 returned servicemen plan to enter college in the next few years.

This great fluctuation in registration will have had some effect on textbooks. During the war, when college populations were extremely low, the demand for new textbooks was also low. Thus, the supply of used textbooks decreased greatly. Fewer texts were revised and, because of paper restrictions, fewer new textbooks were published. Most colleges and other places of higher learning are in need of new textbooks to supply their increasingly greater numbers of students.

In order to find out more concerning future enrollment and the availability of textbooks, interviews were held in May, 1945, with 100 college presidents or administrators throughout the country. This sample is fairly representative of these institutions of higher learning. In the 1940-41 school year there was an average enrollment of 2,854 students in these schools. The questionnaire used for these interviews contained five questions quoted with the results.

Since the war with Japan was not over at the time of the interviews, estimates on the 1946-47 registrations are tempered by the opinions held on that subject by the officials approached. The table shown on the opposite page is based on a tabulation of the answers to questions 1 and 2.

Q. 1. What was the college enrollment for 1940-41?
Regular session? Summer session? University ex-

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tension classes? Other special courses or groups?

- Q. 2. What is the estimated enrollment for the year 1946-47, that is, the basis upon which future plans are being made? Regular session? Summer session? University extension classes? Other special courses or groups?

Since there were exactly 100 interviews, numbers and percentages are the same.

ESTIMATES OF COLLEGE ENROLLMENT

	<i>Regular Session # and %</i>	<i>Summer Session # and %</i>	<i>Special Courses or Groups # and %</i>
1946-47 enrollment will be more than 1940-41	34	47	27
1946-47 enrollment will be the same as 1940-41	9	6	9
1946-47 enrollment will be less than 1940-41	50	31	13
Don't know, can't estimate for 1946-47	6	8	12
Don't have that session	1	8	39
Total interviews	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>

Opinions elicited in answer to question 4 are more likely to be an accurate guide to future registrations because this question concerned itself with long-term plans and was not so apt to reflect uncertainty about the time of the war's end.

- Q. 4. Are plans being made for future growth beyond the 1946-47 academic year? Describe in terms of number of students.

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Of the 100 college officials interviewed, sixty-eight said that they were planning for an increase in enrollment, twenty-five replied that they expected no increase in enrollment, and seven admitted that they had been unable to make plans for future growth. There is a 40 per cent expected average increase in enrollment. This increase is not expected to take place entirely in any one year but may extend over a ten-year period.

The fifth and last question asked college administrators was:

Q. 5. Is there likely to be a normal supply of second-hand textbooks available to students in 1946-47 or is the supply likely to be too low—, very low—, or higher than normal—?

The responses represented, almost universally, a low or very low second-hand textbook supply. Many qualified their response by saying that early revisions of prewar books would make a difference.

While textbooks in the colleges are usually used by more than one student on the average, the need for up-to-date books and a current scarcity of second-hand books will make this field a growing one for printers and publishers in the next few years.

V. HIGHLIGHTS OF THE STUDY AND CONCLUSIONS

WITH THE COMPLETION of the presentation and discussion of the specific findings derived from the study, we have now reached the point of summary and conclusion. The reader, especially if he be identified with any section of the book industry, naturally desires to apply these findings to his own practical problems. Obviously, such generalizations as are expressed below cannot take into account the special circumstances of the individual business, for, as far as the authors of this report are concerned, these remain in the category of the unknown. It is therefore assumed that the reader, fortified as he is with thorough knowledge of his individual problems and outlook, will be in a position to make his own application of the facts, interpretations and conclusions stated herein.

To supply a desirable frame of reference, we give immediately following a number of the highlights of the study as described in detail in the preceding pages. In terms of this condensation, it will then be appropriate to consider the whole picture presented in the report.

I. PRELIMINARY TESTS

Almost six months were devoted to the development of methods, including the testing of questionnaires. Twelve different questionnaires or revisions of questionnaires were tested with a total of 573 test interviews.

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2. THE CONSUMER SURVEY

The consumer survey was conducted in 106 cities and towns. A total of 4,000 personal interviews was completed. The people interviewed were chosen to represent a cross section of the urban and small-town population above the age of fifteen. These interviews were made by 235 interviewers under the direct supervision of sixty-two psychologists associated with The Psychological Corporation. Interviews were made between May 21 and June 8, 1945.

3. READERSHIP

About 70 per cent of all books are read by 21 per cent of our population, namely those who last read a book yesterday. About 94 per cent of all books are read by 50 per cent of our population, namely those who read a book yesterday or within the past month. The inactive readers, constituting the other 50 per cent of the population, account for the remaining 6 per cent of books read.

4. BORROWING AND BUYING

Of books read by the active readers, comprising 94 per cent of all books read, 57 per cent are borrowed, 31 per cent are bought, and 11 per cent are received as gifts. In proportion to the amount of reading, the lower-income groups purchase their books just about as often as the highest-income group.

5. FICTION AND NONFICTION

About 58 per cent of the books most recently read by our sample were fiction, 37 per cent were nonfiction.

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6. THE BIBLE

During the period preceding our survey, the reading of the Bible was equaled, if not surpassed, by the reading of *Forever Amber* and *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*. Among all the books read by our active readers, the Bible constitutes about 4 per cent.

7. MOST READ VS. BEST SELLERS

The best-seller lists give no indication of the popularity of the books reported in terms of the total number of people who read them. The present study shows the standing of the popular books in terms of the proportion of our total population actually reading them.

8. OWNERSHIP OF BOOKS

An article, "Where Is the Book Business Heading?" in the *Saturday Review of Literature*, November 24, 1945, states: "In spite of the omnivorous reading that is done, there are few homes that can boast of a library of even 100 books." Our sample of the urban, nonfarm population, according to the statements made by the people interviewed, shows 34 per cent claiming to have 100 or more books in the home. Twenty-two per cent could not or would not make an estimate. Forty-one per cent say definitely that they have less than 100 books.

9. WHAT MAKES PEOPLE READ BOOKS?

Many factors induce people to read books, but the underlying influence among all these seems to be formal education. The

higher the education, the greater the frequency with which books are read. The influence of education appears in many ways. For example, the frequency of book reading decreases with age, but upon analysis we find that the older people have less formal education than the younger people. This is quite natural in view of the great rapidity with which public education has spread during the past thirty or forty years.

There is also a relation between frequency of reading and income or socioeconomic status. However, this relation is not as close as that between frequency of readership and years of formal education.

Since education is still in the stage of acceleration, this great, fundamental force is continuously at work increasing the habit of reading books. The increase in the number of people reading books will naturally result in increased sale of books.

10. COMPETITORS FOR PEOPLE'S ATTENTION

Our population spends practically twelve times as much time per day reading newspapers, magazines, listening to the radio and going to the movies as it spends in reading books. This gives a rough measure of the time people have available for the reading of books were they so disposed. It is a factor which suggests that there is ample opportunity for the book industry to promote increased sale of books by influencing the desire to read, by improving the channels of distribution, or by other methods which appeal to the various branches and units of the industry.

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11. THE FUTURE OF BOOKS

It has been said at times that the great increase in the reading and purchase of books in recent years was due in large measure to the war, and that with the ending of the war there would be a decided drop. The present survey does not bear out this prediction. Many people claim that they would be reading more books if they had the time, and a large-scale drop in employment would result in their having more time. If incomes should drop sharply and widely, there would undoubtedly be some decrease in the purchase of books as well as in the purchase of all other commodities. During this very period, however, it is quite possible that the reading of books would increase, with the result that the sale of books, also, would increase in due time.

Everything in our survey points to a long-term gain in the reading, and therefore in the purchasing, of books.

12. THE PURCHASE AND PRICE OF BOOKS

The two principal sources for the consumer purchase of books are book stores and book clubs; department stores rank third. Of the books purchased by our sample, 13 per cent were priced at twenty-five cents or less. Our survey does not reveal any overwhelming trend in the direction of low-priced books. In general, the nature of the book seems to be more important than the exact price level.

13. SETS OF BOOKS PURCHASED

Of the total sample of 4,000, 34 per cent have at some time purchased sets of books. However, most sets of books in the

home today were purchased four or more years ago. In general, people expressed themselves as having been very well satisfied with their sets. In view of this fact and of the rising level of buying power in the lower- and middle-income groups, it does not seem unlikely that a considerable market for sets of books is at hand.

14. JUVENILE BOOKS

Children below the age of fifteen represent 23 per cent of the total population, and were not interviewed in this survey. To obtain an adequate picture of this complex market would have required a study as extensive as the 4,000 interview study reported here. Some clues were, however, obtained in the present study, such as the statement by 6 per cent of the 1,652 people planning to enlarge their libraries that they expect to add children's books (they practically never spoke of them as *juvenile* books).

15. THE EFFECT OF THE WAR ON BOOKS

We found book dealers sharing the opinion which seems prevalent in many quarters, that one of the most important reasons for the sharp increase in the sale of books in recent years was the war. Insofar as the war sharply increased the buying power of all sections of the American public and made books an especially accessible and suitable gift, particularly for men in the services, this is undoubtedly true. However, our consumer study indicates that the war was a distinctly secondary and temporary influence, and that its ending does not necessarily mean a sharp falling off in the book business.

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16. PREDICTING THE SUCCESS OF BOOKS

While our study included questions dealing with individual books and types of books, no single survey of this kind can make definite predictions regarding the success of particular books. It is often claimed that books about love and sex are sure to succeed, but every publisher knows that the particular treatment of these subjects, and not the subjects, is the determining factor. In order to predict the popularity of a particular book, specially designed tests can be made on potential readers with excerpts from that book or with the entire book. By submitting a manuscript to a scientifically selected panel of people with the proper techniques for recording their reactions, a forecast of the probable success of a book can be made.

In the present study some indications of trends in the types of books people will read are reflected. However, such trends can be measured far more accurately by studies of this kind repeated at intervals of a year or two. The one underlying trend which it seems safe to predict on the basis of the present study is that toward nonfiction as compared with fiction. The proportion of nonfiction books is already large, and because the reading of such books is correlated with amount of education, the proportion seems bound to grow as the amount of education of the general population increases.

17. BOOK STORES AND DEALERS

Opinions expressed in personal interviews with the managers and owners of book stores and book departments were contrary in at least one important respect to the findings of our

consumer study. As previously stated, book dealers attributed the great increase in the reading of books in recent years to the war above all other causes. In fact, 44 per cent gave this reason. A great number of them also believed that with the ending of the war, there would be a decline in the reading of books. Our study with the readers themselves did not indicate that the war was a major influence, and did not support the belief that the ending of the war would bring a decline in the reading of books. It pointed, on the contrary, to an increase in the reading of books.

If any one factor more than another deserves emphasis on the strength of this study, it is the transcendent influence over the reading, and hence the purchasing, of books exercised by education. To underscore the importance of this factor upon the future of the book business, one has only to cite the following facts:

1. The enormous and growing interest on the part of leading institutions and authorities in the problem of fashioning education to fit the needs and requirements of a democratic way of life;
2. The eventual repercussions of the governmental program of supplying education on unprecedentedly generous terms to millions of returned veterans;
3. The rapid spread of the movement for the shortening of working hours in all fields of business and industry, which ultimately will divert at least a part of the greater leisure time made available to the reading of books;
4. The thirst for knowledge engendered by the new

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pattern of world organization which is in the making and which is evoking widespread responses in the form of organized adult educational activities.

Nobody knows what shape education will ultimately take, but since the day that Gutenberg invented movable type it has always been on the march, largely engaged in liberating the human intellect, yet often forced aside from its appointed course to serve destructive aims and objectives. Whenever great causes have been espoused they have been accompanied or closely followed by an outpouring of books; when the issues drawn were most controversial, the pertinent literature invariably expanded to the greatest proportions. Mankind derives its formal education largely from the reading of the printed word; the signs of the times seem to point definitely to acceleration of the tempo of the processes of education and expansion of their scope.

With every desire to adhere to conservatism in the expression of conclusions based upon the products of the study, it may nevertheless be maintained that they give a picture of a fundamentally sound and lasting demand for books correlating closely with attained levels of education and possessing ramifications which will certainly be no less numerous and diffused in the future than they have been in the past. If this is the foundation upon which the distribution of books may confidently be expected to rest, it becomes a question for each individual publisher and manufacturer to determine how the long-range view should be interpreted in its application to the special conditions confronting him in his own business.

When we come to consider other facts produced by the study, it is justifiable to single out the question of the price

of books as worthy of emphasis. As previously pointed out, the facts obtained did not disclose the presence of an overwhelming trend in the direction of low-priced books, but warranted the conclusion that to the purchaser the nature of the book acquired seemed to be more important than the exact level to which its price conformed.

Recognizing that the rapidly expanding distribution of low-priced books represents a response to sound merchandising methods made possible through successful utilization of principles of mass production, the net result in the long run will probably be the creation of a huge market side by side with the existing market for higher-priced books, but in no sense of the word an interference with the continuing exploitation of the latter.

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